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ARCHITECTURE IN FOCUS

Building big with Indian craftsmen

Local architecture is finding its way back to its roots, with *jaalis*, lime plastering and ironwork popping up on prestigious projects

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Campaign ends for 4th phase of LS polls

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'Rahul leaving Amethi shows his cowardice'

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KKR makes the playoffs in style

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NEARBY

Govt. seeks relaxation of model of conduct

BENGALURU
The Karnataka government has appealed to the Election Commission of India to relax the model code of conduct to enable it to hold meetings to take up relief measures in drought-hit taluks. » Page 6

Metro to have 16 interchange stations

BENGALURU
Apart from Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Interchange station in Majestic, the Bengaluru Metro will have 16 interchange metro stations in Bengaluru. » Page 3

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Will Modi follow his rule, retire at 75, asks Kejriwal

The Delhi CM referred to the 'rule' from 2014 of letting BJP leaders retire when they turned 75, suggests that voting for Modi would amount to making Amit Shah the next Prime Minister

Jaideep Deo Bhanj
NEW DELHI

In the fray: Arvind Kejriwal during a press conference at the Aam Aadmi Party office in Delhi. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Back on the campaign trail after being released from Tihar Jail on interim bail, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said that voting for Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the 2024 Lok Sabha election would amount to voting for Amit Shah as Prime Minister as Mr. Modi would be set to retire from politics as he turns 75 on September 17, 2025.

However, responding to his comments, Union Home Minister Shah said that Mr. Modi would continue as Prime Minister for the full term, and the BJP's constitution did not mention any retirement age.

Mr. Kejriwal cited a norm Mr. Modi has enforced in the BJP that leaders should retire at 75. Suggesting a power struggle within the BJP, Mr. Kejriwal said, "If their [BJP] government is formed, they will first dispose of [Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister] Yogi Adityanath and then make Amit Shah the Prime Minister of the country. PM Modi is asking for votes for Amit Shah. Will Amit Shah fulfil Modi's guarantee?"

Mr. Kejriwal took a cue from Telangana Chief Minister Revanth Reddy, who also questioned if Mr. Modi was ready to retire at 75, and said, "Modi*ji* himself in 2014 made a rule that whoever in the BJP turns 75, they will be made to retire. First L.K. Advani was made to retire, then Murli Manohar Joshi, Sumitra Mahajan and Yashwant Sinha. If this pattern is followed, I would like to ask the BJP who is their PM candidate?"

He added that Mr. Modi was on a "one nation, one leader" mission to impose "dictatorship". "If the BJP wins the Lok Sabha election, all Opposition leaders, including Mamata Banerjee, Tejashvi Yadav, M.K. Stalin, Pinarayi Vijayan and Uddhav Thackeray, will be in jail. They won't even leave leaders within the BJP as they have already finished the careers of Shivraj Singh Chouhan, Vasundhara Raje, Manohar Lal Khattar and Raman Singh. The next in line is Yogi Adityanath," Mr. Kejriwal said.

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Study shows impact of climate hazards on women, children

Maitri Porecha
NEW DELHI

The area of climate-change is under-researched, notes Soumya Swaminathan.

Women and children in Bihar, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal and Telangana are particularly vulnerable to climate change-related disasters, reveals an internal study commissioned by the Ministry of Women and Child Development. Children exposed to climate hazards are more likely to be stunted, underweight, and more vulnerable to early pregnancies, it elaborates.

The study exclusively accessed by *The Hindu* identifies climate and health hotspots in order to specifically understand the impact of floods, cyclones and droughts on health of women and children.

"The issue of climate-change impact on women and children is under-researched and often overlooked in policy formulation," Soumya Swaminathan, chairperson, M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation (MSSRF), and former chief scientist of World Health Organization told *The Hindu*. Titled "How does climate change impact women and children across agro-ecological zones in India - A scoping study", the study was done by MSSRF.

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Now, you can call BBMP to report on illegal banners

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has released a phone number for the public to register their complaints against those putting up illegal flexes and banners. The number is 94806 85700.

The move comes after the Election Commission's flying squad filed a complaint regarding illegal flexes put up near Deve Gowda petrol station circle, M.K. Puttalingaiah Road, and Banashankari II Stage. The Banashankari police booked five persons allegedly involved in putting up the illegal flexes.

They were put up to convey birthday wishes to Karthik Venkatesh Murthy, a local party leader. The accused are Karthik Venkatesh Murthy, Akash Gowda, Prajwal V., Karthik M., and Yugadhar. The police said they would be fined.

Lit by lightning

With several parts of Maharashtra expecting rain, a cloud-covered evening sky sends a lightning bolt right down to the ground in Sangli, just beyond the banks of the Krishna river. PTI

Summer drives up coconut price in Bengaluru to ₹50 per piece

Aakansha Munshi and Aryan Bhatt
BENGALURU

The price of coconuts is expected to go up further unless there is a good monsoon season in Karnataka this year. FILE PHOTO

One of the staple ingredients in many Indian kitchens, coconut has gotten as expensive as ₹50 per piece in Bengaluru due to limited supply and the growing demand for tender coconuts in the market due to summer season.

Wasim Khan, a coconut vendor from Madiwala, highlighted the impact of extreme weather conditions on coconut production. "Previously, coconuts were priced at ₹30 to ₹35, but now it is not less than ₹45 per piece," he stated.

"The heat has made it difficult to produce and store coconuts, leading to reduced supply and increased wastage due to cracks in the fruit," he added.

Reeling under last year's drought, the production of coconut in some of the major cultivation areas like Tumakuru and Chitradurga had come down.

The prices are expected to go up further unless there is a good monsoon season in the State this year. "There was neither any rain nor other sources of irrigation for coconut plantations this time. Moreover, the trees were infected by a couple of diseases too, and hence, the production has decreased by around 50% in both Chitradurga and Tumakuru districts. The price of coconuts might go up further," said Kantharaj, a coconut farmer from Hiriyur in Chitradurga.

While the coconut supply chain gets a little disrupted every year, this time, due to high temperatures it has become worse, according to officials of Coconut Development Board.

"This time, the entirety of Karnataka has been drought-affected, and the arrival of mature coconuts has been very low. I do not see prices decreasing anytime soon, and it is only expected to increase.

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Unsafe environment: Children play in a pit being filled up with rice husk to be mixed with clay to bake bricks at a kiln.

Raw material: Migrant workers load carts with clay to be pressed into brick moulds.

Crack of dawn: Work begins early at a brick kiln near Anandapuram village in Andhra Pradesh.

Slow burning lives

Workers along with their families travel from villages to work in the brick kilns of Andhra Pradesh after the agricultural season, toiling more than 12 hours a day amidst scorching temperatures and dust, for sums as meagre as ₹10,000 per month

K.R. Deepak
deepak.kr@thehindu.co.in

The merciless sun blazes over a brick kiln located between the Anandapuram and Padmanabham villages of Visakhapatnam district in Andhra Pradesh. A group of over 100 workers labour tirelessly, shaping and moulding bricks with practised hands.

At the break of dawn every day, the men and women start filling mould after mould with clay and stack them in a row to dry. Faces are smeared with sweat and clay as the day stretches on. The radiating heat from the furnaces is scorching and the summer temperatures soar beyond 40 degrees Celsius in this part of the State. For several years now, families have been travelling from their villages in neighbouring Odisha to the brick kiln to make a living when the agricultural season is over. The men and women toil over 12 hours a day for about ₹10,000 per month. The physical strain, extreme weather and exposure to brick dust bring a host of health problems.

Children of brick kiln workers are often forced to accompany their parents to work instead of attending school. In the harsh environment at the kiln, childhood is a luxury they cannot afford. Sasmita, a teenager, has come to the kiln this season to earn some money for her education expenses. "This is how I spend my summer vacation. Life is very tough here, but the income supports my college fee," she said.

Andhra Pradesh Labour Department officials say it is heartwrenching when they find children aged below 10 working in some of these sites. Last year, the rescued children were readmitted in schools. Efforts are on to set up schools in worksites to accommodate children and keep families together.

Painstaking process: Women fill moulds with clay to make bricks, one at a time.

Classifieds

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LIFE MADE SIMPLE

THE HINDU

Matrimonial

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

BRIDEGROOMS WANTED

COSMOPOLITAN

NAIR GIRL Aug 1974 US citizen unit manager Chicago caste/lang no bar seeks groom from US residents only. cont 9895824803

DOCTOR

FAIR BEAUTIFUL 26/155 Vanniyakulashathriya Girl Chennai Dr. [DNB] Surgery seeks PG Doctor. Groom from Same Caste Ct: 9841982227 / 9841141583

DOCTOR GIRL 30/156 MBBS MD General Medicine, seeks Doctors/ suitable grooms 9447493034, 9497168001.

SC AD, 30 yrs, MBBS, Doctor, working in NHS, UK, Hastham, Kanni seeks groom preferably in UK. 9003017072

HINDU TAMIL BC PG 26, 5'9" Fair Modest Seeks Tall Handsome BC PG Doctors with Good Habits, Clinical / Non Clinical. Ct: 7200365364

NADAR GIRL : Fair, 25y, MBBS, Seeks Doctor Alliance. Any Suitabe. Chennai /Any Dist .Contact: 9363570731

PILLAI / Mudaliyar : GIRL, Fair. 25 MBBS. (DGO) Seeks Groom Doctor or Any suitable, Chennai or Any Place:7824023030

HINDU REDDY 33 Y, 165cms Doctor MBBS, MS. Suitable Never Married Groom From Chennai CNB Call: 89256 40111

VELLALAR (CNB) Fair 30 MBBS seeks Doctor Groom. 8056325579

KERALITE HINDU Girl, Doctor MBBS 28, fair, working at UK. Professionals family. PG Doctors/ Professionals settled at European countries/ Super Speciality doctors from India preferred. WhatsApp No.9847325450

BRIDEGROOM WANTED
MD Anesthesiology Doctor, Age: 34, 165cm fair, beautiful, cultured & homely. Settled in Chennai. Father Doctor Kerala Nair, Mother Tamil CSI. Doctor or Engineer groom preferred.
98400 50381 / 98409 85383

BRIDEGROOM WANTED
DOCTOR PARENTS invite post Graduate Doctor Grooms for their fair, beautiful girl M.S (O.G) working in Govt Hospital at Chennai, belongs to Pillai Community born on 1992
98431 44420

Intercaste Doctor Parents seeks alliance for their only daughter MBBS, MD, very fair, good looking, affluent age 39yrs/162cm, Divorcee, Associate Professor, Private Medical College. Caste No Bar, only doctor groom preferred. Contact : 9443167551

ENGINEER

Hindu Maruthuvar born May 95 Software Engineer seeks suitable Groom inland/abroad. Contact 9025690557.

GOVT / QUASI GOVT

HINDU DEVENDRAKULA Vellalar girl, 28 yrs, 5Ft 4inch, 65 KG, B. Tech(IT), Preparing for TNPSC, Uthradam, Magaram. Father as GM in IOC, Madurai, Mother–Home maker, Brother B.Tech (mech) appearing for UPSC, seeks grooms with qualified, clean habits– with Govt (central/state) jobs or decent jobs in PVT companies .caste–No bar. Contact: 7550307487/ 6379936273

MALAYALAM

RE-MARRIAGE CHRISTIAN Cheramar CSI girl 35/160, no liability, doing Ph.D seeks alliance from professionally employed grooms from any Christian 9895657200 / 9447882519

NAIR GIRL 37/162 Palakkad; pooradam one dhosham; Associate Professor (Ayurvedic) working in Ahmedabad.only daughter of retired parents (Father Army & Mother Teacher). seeks alliance from professionally employed grooms. 9447408294.

THE HINDU
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MALAYALAM

NAIR GIRL 30/190cm, B.Tech, MS in Engineering working in USA. Seeks alliance from professionally employed grooms in USA. Contact 9495626761.

HINDU EZHAVA Girl Gynecologist Working at Kannur Medical College 22.7.95 Uthiradam Upper Middle Class Seeks Same Profession Groom 8014205710

MUSLIM GIRL (33,159cm), M.Tech, Sr. Data Engineer (Techno Park, Tvm), D/o retd Govt officials with liberal values. Divorcee, no liabilities. 9656163623, 9446451249.

KERALA HINDU SC girl Revathy 32/147 B.Tech MACL software Engineer MNC, Hyderabad seeks suitable alliance. 9446467799.

NRI

CHRISTIAN DOCTOR 33/165, seeks God fearing groom, from good Christian family, preferably professional working in UK. Contact: 9442990948

TAMIL

TAMIL GOD fearing spinster 1970/ 165 M.Com, M.Phil Ex–Lecturer seeks suitable Tamil Christian godly bachelor/widower. Email: annvex@yahoo.com

TAMIL MUSLIM Bride, 30/159cm, AVP in MNC at Bengaluru seeks qualified Tamil Muslim Groom working at Hyderabad/Bengaluru.Ct: 9080501299

CSI CHRISTIAN Nadar Girl, 33 years, M.E., MBA seeks alliance from well Educated groom with Govt. Central / State or other Professionals, Contact: 9443286920

ELITE TAMIL Muslim B.E., 23, Seeks qualified, Suitable Groom Contact : 90807 90001

CSI NADAR, 24/168cm, BE, Elite Family. Seeks Suitable Groom. Contact: 9380791999

CHRISTIAN GROOM age 33 to 36 Well qualified from well to do family, for a well qualified Nadar Christian girl, from well to do family, working in a reputed international institution in Chennai as Senior Manager. Parents Contact. 9790787919.

CSI NADAR 25,MBA,VIP, Need:IAS,IPS, IFS, Group1, MBBS,business group, ME,MArch,RC Hindu Nadar Ok 9445286222

MUSLIM SLIM girl BE(CSC), 37 seeks qualified, employed, Never married Tamil Muslim Groom. 9444235779

AD 28/152 Asst Engineer, State Govt. Poosam. Permanent posting Chennai. Native Thanjavur. Blw 33yrs. Ph9443151444

TAMIL YADAVA, 28yrs, B.Tech, MBA, Elite family background.Seeks Suitable Groom Ct: 9710093999/ 9710091999

VISHWAKARMA, 32YRS, BE, Business Family in Chennai. Seeks Suitable Groom. Contact: 9047192999/ 8939691888

PILLAI 30 MBBS MS doing Mch Barani Chennai seeks Pg Dr Chennai Geetham 9884858014

TAMIL VISWAKARMA, 36/158, Ph.D, Food Technologist WFH/MNC Middle class Nagercoil seeks educated/ well employed Groom in Metro cities. 9740091474, 9535289859

CHETTIAR 29YRS IT Professional Seeking Well Settled Affulent Groom, Caste No Bar. 9677214361 / 9840142562

TIRUNELVELI HINDU NADAR girl 26yrs, 5ft 6 inch , M.Arch, working in US seeks a well qualified groom 98401 00836

HINDU NADAR Widow 43, IT Job Own House (grownup Son), Chennai. Seeks alliance Caste No Bar Ct: 9600103393

AGAMUDI MUDALIAR 32/165 Mirugasim Raghu in Lagnam PG(HR MNC) Seeks IIM/PG, Pillai Groom Also. 9176780777

VANIYA CHETTIAR, M.Sc, 43/157, Karthigai, Govt.Scntf. Officer seeks equally Qualified Employed Groom. Contact: 94452 07116

HINDU GIRL Production Engineer in Germany BE MS NUS (mechanical) fair soft gentle pleasing manners 26/156 cms intercaste parents seek Engineer/ Doctor/ Professional groom 9363631558

RICH MUDALIYAR 28yrs MBBS MD Elite business family in Chennai.Seeks Suitable Groom 9710093999/ 9710091999

MUKULATHOR Kallar 30Yrs/161cm Psychatrist, Natchathiram - Pooram, Rasi -Simman, seeks suitable Groom. Caste no bar. CT:99949-16611.

MAY 94/167 fair SC/PL BE , TCS Chennai, Parents Hindu/CSI. Seeks Groom Dr/Er, Govt Employee. 8056143638

TAMIL

ADIDRAVIDAR, AGE 27 BE, Govt 65, 000/– Fair, Well settled. Wants Suitable Groom. 08122289871 / 9444139323.

NAIDU, 33/170, Fair girl, MBBS prep PG, Seeks Doctor/Business groom Rich Family. BC/MBC. Ph: 99442 53292.

HINDU NADAR sisters, August 1994 / 167 cms / 63 kg, ME, Thiruvathirai, Mithunam. December 1998 / 166 cms / 60 kg, BE, MNC job Chennai, Poosam, Kadagam. Seeks suitable grooms. Ct: 96265 15511

SBI MANAGER, BE MBA,SC AD Hindu, 35yrs, Mesham–Bharani, seeking suitable & qualified Groom. Ph–8056104103

NATHAMA UDAYAR, Parkava kulam girl, aged 31 years, Doctor doing first year M.D seeks suitable groom belonging to either Vellalals,Mudaliars or Agamudaiyars aged below 36 years, premier institute or professional with clean habits Ct:8870699820

EMPLOYED GROOM Below 41 Yrs Required for a Hindu Nadar Divorcee 36 Yrs Getting Six Digit Pay . 9443156344

BRIDEGROOM WANTED For 27 Tamil / MS (CSE) , USA Software Engr , Seattle , WA.Similar profile wanted. Parents Inter Hindu & RCC. Email : goodrich3210@gmail.com

F–PILLAI, M–SENGUNTHAR, 28/153cms, Doctor MBBS Preparing for PG, Revathi, Meenam Seeks Suitable Groom BC/ OC/ FC/ MBC only. Ct: 9566230325

MUDALIAR 25/160 Beautiful,BE,SWE,Infosys,CH–500000.PA, Well Settled Family,CNB. 9043991629,9043987029

DEVENDRAKULA VELLALAR Thiruvathirai (4) 26/162 BE CIVIL Jr. Engr. Wrkg Southern Railways, Seeks Suitable Boy. 94436 86234.

RICH MUDALIYAR, 23yrs, MBA, Own constructions, Ware Houses & Landlord. Elite business in Chennai. Seeks Suitable Groom 9710093999/ 9710091999

HINDU SC/AD , 40 yrs, BE, Accenture Chennai, kumbam/avittam, never married seeks suitable Groom Ct: 9443445388 (Caste no bar)

MUDALIAR POOSAM 25/168 USA Citizen, B.Sc. Working IT, seeks Qlfd. Groom. Whatsapp: +91 7826029997

CASTE NO Bar (Divorcee): 33/V.Fair & Beautiful, MBA (UK), Business, Chennai, Elite Family, Seeks Groom – Unmarried /Divorce– Business / Abroad – 8925019776

MUDALIAR: 26/165, Fair&Beautiful, B. Tech, MNC, Bangalore,20Lakhs PA, Well settled Family, seeks groom– Eng/Business– 9841272503, 8939012419

VANNIYA KULA KSHATRIYA Bride, 22 Years Old, M.Com, Seeks Groom from same caste upper middle class. mail id: mangalam.leelavathy@gmail.com

PILLAI / SOZHIYA Vellalar 29/ 162cm,B.Tech (NIT) (UPSC ASPIRANT) (GROUP–II Services TN on the anvil) Working as IT Presales, Seeks suitable Bridegroom, Ct:9443543456 /9442712849

HINDU NADAR, M.E, Age 28/171 Cms, 8 LPA, seeks in same caste, employed in government or private with clean habits, good salary and settled. Contact: 9003234049

Groom Wanted
Chennai's Elite Industrialist seeking a Groom for his "DAUGHTER" Completed Masters at Ivey league (USA), running a successful business
Groom Preference
Age : (28-33), Height: 5.8ft & above, from an Affluent Family Caste no bar.
Contact : **93536 81255**

48/163 MUDALIAR/PILLAI M.com MBA Seeks professionally Qualifd Unmarried Below 50 Clean habits CNB 9444837355/9500113136/ anbumatri@gmail.com

HINDU SC AD 27 Rohini B.Tech working chennai seeks Bridegrooms working business Caste Nobar. Ph: 8667278947

HINDU SC AD, Poorattathi/ Meenam, Age 35, M.C.A Working in a MNC company, seeking Educated Groom from a good family background, below 38 Years from any Tamil Speaking Community. Contact: 9840107770, 9952930893.

BRIDES WANTED

BUSINESS

AGE 37 Handsome, Well Settled Groom seeks VIP Girl and first Marriage, Remarriage, Divorce. Ct 9597834451

COSMOPOLITAN

37 years fair groom, Manager in MNC, London seeks tall fair suitable girl. CNB. Contact: 9440156473, 9951542753

DUBAI BASED Nair boy 35. Business Well settled (Divorcee) Seeking Educated beautiful girl CNB. 8072582030

KARKATHAR PILLAI 36, 5ft 7inch, fair and handsome, BE (Telecom), Officer Indian Army IT Branch, 30 lacs PA, never married, son of retd army officer looking for affable and well educated girl. Equal and sub caste no bar. 9448307862.

HINDU 45, BBA handsome well settled–Coimbatore 1st marriage, divorcee/widow, CNB seeks bride. 8903712843.

DOCTOR

HINDU NADAR, 28/165cm, MBBS, MD, 1 Lakh per month, Seeks Suitable Bride Contact: 9380791999

Nair Doctor 31, 183 cm seeks Alliance from Doctors with PG Contact: 9544050952

ENGINEER

MUDALIAR GROOM, First Marriage, 45, 5ft 7inch, Engineer, Bangalore. 9886493369. Hindu Brides wanted

ENGLISH

South Indian Brahmin, Mar1988, 5'11" MSc Engg (UK), never married, working in Vancouver, Canada, seeks professionally qualified bride, willing to relocate. Contact WhatsApp 9967531921.

HINDI

1985/175CM, 50 Lakhs PA, Never Married, Bangalore. WhatsApp: 96290 12248

TAMIL

CSI CHRISTIAN NADAR Tamil, US Citizen 27/175/B.E.,M.S/Fair, Rich Family, Clean Habits, God Fearing seeks USA/UK/Australia/India Educated God Fearing Girl. Contact : 9003152133

CSI CHRISTIAN Nadar, 27, MS, USA seeks fair bride from same community, willing to relocate to USA. Ct: 9382266099

TAMIL MUSLIM –May 1994/5'9" Handsome MS (USA) Senior SW Engr.USA. Seeks Bride (Tamil) Fair, Tall (5'4"– 5'9") Age (24–27yrs)– Engr. background– working/ Studying in USA or willing to move to USA. Ct: 9444149649 (Whatsapp) with Profile & Photos.

RC CHRISTIAN, 41yrs/170, B.E. Software Engineer, never married, working for mnc, Chennai. CT–9500188067

VELLALA MUDALIAR 37/168 Swathi BE, Coaching Centre 60Kp/m Income. Seeks any graduate Bride CNB 8939170330

AGAMUDAYAR /40 divorce no child, teetottler Seeks bride age between 35 to 37.unmarried/divorce without child. horoscope must Ct: 9444261735

TAMIL

ARCHITECT, AGE 40, Height 5'6", Hindu (Reddy), Anusham–3, Chennai / Bangalore. Seeking Bride Age 31 to 38 Cast No Bar, Ct: +91 7708062990

HINDU , BE / SWE/ 32/ 5.7/Sc – Settled in Bangalore.Belongs to educated and affluent family.Seeking Bride from same/other community , from educated and well settled family.Contact no:9845401461.

ARCOT MUDALIAR MBA IIM 170/Sep 88 Thiruvathirai (Clean Horoscope) Unmarried Chennai Handsome Fair Teetotaler, 52 Lks. Seeks suitable match. Caste NB. 99404 34055, 97420 10729

VELLALAR/PILLAI, 29/170CM, BA.BL (HONS), Advocate, seeks Bride (sub caste no bar) TN. CT:89398 45694

HINDU SAIVAPILLAI Thanusu Uthiradam 30,174cm BE MBA SoftwareMNC 10L/PA Bangalore Seeks Same Caste working Graduate Bride. 9487995548

MUDALIYAR, KETTAI,38/165, M. Tech.,(Ph.D),HOD, Pvt.Engg. College, Pondy. Seeks bride 29 to 36yrs 9442557578

HINDU NADAR, 34/170, BE, Own Business, 5L p/m, Divorcee, Elite family. Seeks Suitable Bride Ct:9047192999

HINDU NADAR 29/175cm, B.Tech, 1,75, 000p/m Seeks Suitable Bride Contact: 9380791999

AGAMUDAYA MUDALIYAR, 42 Mirugasiridam PhD TN Govt Job Rs 1.35 Lakh P/M. "No Broker' Divorced : 7904550883

WANTED PILLAI / Mudaliar bride age 34 to 37 for groom age 42. BE Computer Systems, UK. Never married before. Affluent. Managing family business. Ct: 95000 85565

✔ **BE MS** (CS), 28yrs, 180cm Smart, good looking, A Product Architect–IT/Successful Entrepreneur & Founder of leading FinTech based in Chennai earning 70 lacs+/yr. From an educated HINDU THEVAR family, seeking a bride with similar values from a good family background +91 7845821205

AGE 46, 2nd Marriage, Working in Hospital at Qatar. Suitable Bride who willing to come Qatar. Ct: +97433840227 / 9498328263

PILLAI/SOZHIYA Vellalar, 29Yrs, 155cm, B.Tech, MBA, Working as Senior HR Executive in a reputed Company. Father College Prof (Rtd), Mother Agri Officer, Only son. Seeks suitable Bride. Subsect no bar. Cont: 94426-29455, 94889-60455.

HINDU KALLAR, 33yrs, PG Er. (Civil) seeks Engineering Bride from Southern District. Same caste only. Ct: 9123581088

Vanniyakulashatriyar 26/170cm, MS Canada. Thulam / Visaham / Ragu &Kethu 2nd Place,Employed in Bank@ Toronto seeks Educationally Qualified Bride from Decent Family. 9840087405

BALIJA NAIDU, DCE, Age 50, Divorced, Own House in Ashok Nagar, Income–20000/– Call : 9444705068

OFFICER 50, Govt Dept Separated Looking for Independent, Broad Minded, Well Settled Woman, 45 + With or Without Issues as a Companion Genuine Person. Contact : 9585245551

SC AD 28/B.Tech.,MBA.,Asst. Manager (Wipro)1,30,000/– pm Seeks Bride. Ph:9444993417 / Whatsapp:7397674481

HINDU NADAR 32/173cm, BE, 300000 per month, well settled. Seeks Suitable Bride. KA Raman Nadar 9380791999

YADAVA, 41 First Marriage,Pvt Ltd Chennai, National Head 18Lac PA Seeks Bride CNB/Divorcee ok :8610014920

VANNIYAR 37/168 BE, 1.45L, Visagam4th, Working in TATA Group of Company seeks Suitable Bride same CasteCt:9944330445/mpragathees@gmail.com

VISWAKARMA TAMIL 30/164 SW Eng/Makaram/Thiruvonam/B.E.(IT)/Fair Seeks suitable bride from the same community ct–9488921838

HINDU NADAR, age 33, B.E., working in Qatar Good salary Seeks Educated Bride. Ct: 9444183814/ 7299248361

CHETTIAR, 30YRS, MBA London, Landlord, Madurai seeks good looking Bride. Caste No Bar. Ct: 94437 26677, Email Id: chiyanrajaram2@gmail.com

LIFE PARTNER FOR son, 37, 5ft 11inch, B.E., IT professional in Chennai.Interfaith parenting (Father Hindu, Mother Catholic). He has no religious beliefs. Caste no bar.Contact 9600174846

RC NADAR Groom, 44 yrs Holding Senior Management Role in MNC, Divorcee No Kids Seeks Bride 9787586387

TAMIL

HINDU NADAR, 30yrs / 180cm, BE MBA, 33 LPA in MNC, Chennai, Well Educated Affluent Family, Seeking Well Educated Bride From a Similar Family Background. 9841054900

MUDALIAR 54 Divorcee Ph.D Engg abroad return Shares trade 5Cr properties sk suitable bride 40–45 no issues CNB 9500367269 sbkkeck@yahoo.com

MUDALIAR 29/170, Handsome, BE,MS,ML.Engr, AI MNC,165000.USD. PA, Afflunet Family,CNB.9043991629, 9043987029

BRIDE WANTED Elite Mudaliyar 25yrs MBA Own Constructions & Finance, Business family 9710093999/ 9710091999

HINDU DEVENDIRA kula vellalar M.E., 29/168 Asst. Engg. in PWD seeks suitable bride 8667380725, 8825793743

MUDALIYAR 26/165CM, BE, M.Tech, 1 Lakh per month, Elite Family, Seeks Suitable Bride. Contact: 8939691888

DIVORCEE REVATHY 38/186 B.E. M.B.A Sr. Manager Fair Iyer Boy seeks Graduate Brahmin / Veg Girl 9176090042

Required Brahmin Girl for a Brahmin Groom. Age 42 Divorcee Decent job Decent salary. Contact: 9841381417

IYER MAGAM 40 B.Com 360000 PA Seeks any Veg. Girl Contact : 80127 58006

TAMIL

BRAHMIN, N BALAJI 38, MBA, HR Manager, 1 Lac PM, Electrosteel pvt Ltd, Kalahasthi, Seeking alliance employed or not working, and have privilege of bringing her dependent Parents. Contact: balajimnm2011@gmail.com, Ph: 9962148742, 8056256105

HINDU PARKAVAKULAM Uthiradam Magaram,officer- Indian Navy Widower 37yrs with Girl Child-3yrs seeks Fair, Graduate Bride, Unmarried / Divorcee without Child. CNB. Ct: 99625 11987

SC Hindu 1986 Revathi Meenam Manager Bank. Contact: 9385842167

Gavara Naidu, 28, M.E. Chennai, Own Business, Own House, Subsect No Bar. Ph: 9841097110

Hindu / Devendrakula Velalar (Pallan) 28M / 175CM / B.E, PGDM / Working in Bangalore / 11L PA seeks Employed Tamil Bride Phone : 9444450238 / 9840356343

BRAHMIN AGE 55 Widower, Seeks Brahmin Bride below 54yrs old, Unmarried, Widow, Divorcee ok. – 93845 86456

Nellai Saiva Pillai 29/175/1994/ 18LF MNBank in Chennai, seeks beautiful IT Girl same / sub caste Contact: 9445868954.

✔ **NRI Divorced** Hindu Pillai BE M.S, 81 born, poosam 5'7, looking for suitable Bride. Subsects no bar. Contact : 9894576770.

Hindu Vysya Chettiyar 58yrs Self Employed Rs.6 L.P.A, Pure Veg. Seeks Bride. Caste No Bar. Ct: 94990 14886.

TAMIL

SOUTH INDIAN BRAHMIN BRIDE WANTED

Suitable match for IYER boy (32+ years, 180cm, fair, B.E. Haritha gothram, Vadama, Moolam) working in Singapore for MNC. Family well-settled in Singapore.

Prefer SOUTH INDIAN BRAHMIN GIRL (subsect/region no bar; age around 28, fair, graduate, vegetarian and good family background).

WhatsApp details to +65-9154-7135

TELUGU

RICH NAIDU, 27yrs, BS(US),Well Educated family background. Seeks Suitable Bride Ct:9962791888/ 7094991999

24 MANI Chettiyar, Star Kettai, 44/ MBA, 1st Marriage, 40000/PM, Seeking Good family Bride. Ct:9383002003

BRIDE WANTED Rich Kamma Naidu, 31yrs,CA,Own firm in Chennai ,Well Educated family. 9710093999/ 9710091999

NAIDU 32 B.Tech IT PGDM HR Chennai Seeks Naidu(Any) Bride Well educated & employed Cell: 9444753417

BALIJA NAIDU 31/172 Star Aswini B.Tech Working with MNC Good Looking Smart Boy Good Family Seeks Beautiful fair Qualified Chennai Based Girl from Decent Telugu family Horoscope must subsect no bar Ct:9790705800

TELUGU IYER Age 32 Thiruvonam-4 Maths Teacher 5 Lac P.A Working in Coimbatore seeks Qualified Girl Caste no Bar, Prefer Veg. CT: 9943443509.

Balija Naidu 30yrs M.Tech,Working in Medtronic Hyderabad, 16.5L PA seeks Educated, Gd looking Bride from same caste, age 24-27yrs. Ct: 98405 65046

TELUGU

NRI Telugu Hindu Australian Rajaka 34 yrs, seeking any south Indian Girl, preferably Keralite or Tamilian CNB. Ph / Wp:+61 498081108

URDU

BRIDE WANTED
Urdu Muslim, Affluent, Well settled hotelier family in Chennai Seeks affluent, well-to-do, self employed / entrepreneur bride for their son 35 years / 180 cm
CONTACT
hotelmars@yahoo.com
9884079899

MARRIAGE BUREAU

US UK Canada All Caste Religion 1st Marriage Remarriage. Ct:8248757840

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ELITE BRIDES WANTED

CHETTIYAR, 26, 183 cms, Businessman, B.Com. Lives in Selam. Father is a Businessman with a good net worth. Looking for a like minded match from Chettiyar/ Mudaliyar Community. Contact: 6366448344

PILLAI, 30, 180 cms, Entrepreneur, M.Tech. Lives in Chennai. Belongs to business class family. Family is financially well off. Looking for a suitable match from similar community. Contact: 6366448343

ARYA VYSYA, 28, 180 cms, Engineer, MS Engg. Lives in USA. Father is a Businessman. Family is financially well off. Looking for like minded match from Arya Vysya, Kamma any Telugu community from USA. Contact: 6366448344

VANNIYA KULA KSHATRIYA, 28, 183 cms, Doctor, MS(Ortho). Lives in Chennai. Parents are working professionals. Family is financially well off. Looking for a like minded Doctors match. Contact:6366448343

ELITE GROOMS WANTED

BRAHMIN-IYER, 24, 165 cms, Entrepreneur, Masters in Arts. Lives in Coimbatore. Father is a Businessman. Family is financially well off. Looking like minded match from Brahmin Community. Contact: 6366448344

VANNIYAR, 26, 160 cms, Entrepreneur, MBBS. Father is a Businessman. Family is financially well off. Looking like minded match from any community. Contact: 6366448344

NADAR, 23, 168 cms, B.Arch. Lives in Tirunelveli. Father is a working professional. Family is financially well off. Looking for a suitable match from same community. Contact: 6366448343

CHRISTIAN, 26, 165 cms, Bio-Tech. Lives in Chennai. Belongs to business class family. Family is financially well off. Looking for a like minded match from any Christian community in India/Abroad. Contact: 6366448343

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SEEKS LIFE Partner for 75Years Person from Kerala, Settled in Chennai. Cast /Age no bar. Cont: 9884749445

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DIVORCEE

1964 BORN second divorcee seeking divorcee / widow bride without kids ,who shares similar values and aspirations. I am open to exploring the possibility of a meaningful connection. I would to get to know you better.ct–63857 54610

ADIDRAVIDAR DIVORCE –Seeking Childless Widow/Divorcee/Spinster, simple educated bride, aged between 35 to 40 years for a legally divorced, well educated (B.E) ,45 yrs groom working as Project Manager in MNC. Religion no bar. Contact : 8122589004

DOCTOR

30, SURGEON, seeks doctor bride (MBBS, MD/ MS, DM/ MCh), Kannada/ Tamil, OBC/ BC, Ph: 8618607705

MALAYALAM

MALAYALI EZHAVA boy 40/182 Anusham IT professional Settled in Chennai, looking for an educated understanding partner from Kerala/ Tamilnadu. Contact: 9940122336/ 9884120895

VISHWAKARMA (CARPENTER– Malayalam) , 34/ 5ft 1inch, Punartham, Private Company Job in Coimbatore, needs suitable bride from same community Contact 9442267579

NRI

NAIDU 29/180CM, Pooratathi, BTech MS, Working as Research Engr, PR of Sweden Contact Father 9566682220

PUNJABI

Bride wanted for a Hindu handsome boy 38 years, height 5'10". Delhi based business family, very well placed, LLB, innocent divercee, without issue. No demand for dowry. Southern families welcome. Contact +919868129898, pradhand@manaroil.ae

TAMIL

TAMIL MUSLIM 28/172 MS Gen surgery seeks prof qualified bride Ct: 82200 42091 mdullahsafi@gmail.com

TAMIL

THULUVA VELLALA Mudaliar Anusham 27/173 CA (Final) 30 Lacs/Pa seeks CA(studying)/ Bank Professional/ others from respectable family. Pillai, Agamudaiyar also ok. Ct:9444451113

VANNIYAR, MS (USA) 31/172 Swathi Fair, Employed in USA seeks well educated suitable bride. Ct: 9840850716

28 YEARS employed in public sector, 172cm, Rs.80K, seeking fair, good looking graduate girl, age b/w 23–26 yrs. Caste no bar. CT:9488371116.

KARKATHA VELLALAR 41 MBA Govt. 16LPA Divorcee well settled Seeks Graduate Bride Caste No Bar 92455 57150

MUDALIAR, DIVORCEE, PhD, Professor, Pvt Eng.College, age 50,Magaram, Seeks educated unmarried/widow/ Divorcee without child from FC/ OBC (40–45yrs) No expectation Ct:9150799959

NELLAI SAIVA Pillai, 33yrs, Kettai, Completed schooling in abroad, working in IT, MNC - 33L PA seeks Bride from good family. Ct: 8870800415

TAMIL

Hindu SC/AD. 36Yrs, BE, Sr. Software Engineer, TCS Chennai. never married Seeks suitable Groom Ct: 9952147216

PILLAI / MUDALIAR, 34, MD, Well Settled family seeks Groom aged 34-36 yrs, Engineer/ Business/ Doctor. Contact: 9345855735

Tamil Muslim, Fair, Gd Looking, 26/ 160, B.N.Y.S, doing M.D, Seeks Doctor Engineer Professionals Preferably from Tirunelveli & Chennai. Contact: 7867044233, talk2nilar@gmail.com

TELUGU

REDDY 39/165 Divorcee Veg empld in Chennai affluent family seeks issueless groom below 44. Ct: 9884657084

BALIJA NAIDU, 28/152cm, Fair, PG, MNC Chennai Ct: 6380984534/saanvigklr@gmail.com

TELUGU

HINDU TELUGU Naidu Born Aug 1990/ 165 cm Ph.D Scholar smart medium complexion from a Reputed family seeks well educated and settled groom in India born after 1987. Ct:9790908109

RICH NAIDU, 27yrs, CA, Own Firm, Elite Business family. Seeks Suitable Groom. Ct: 9710093999/ 9710091999

AFFLUENT KAMMA 40 good looking bride M.Sc Psychology seeks well settled handsome qualified groom. Subsect no bar. 9444410207/ tvm1945@gmail.com

RICH NAIDU 27yrs, B.Tech, Elite Business Family in Chennai.Seeks Suitable Groom Ct:9710093999/ 9710091999

52yrs Brahmin seeks 56yrs max. Divorcee/ widower man should relocate to Hyderabad. Ph: 9032090571

TELUGU

KAMMA 25/170 Pretty Smart affluent Girl. Grooms from Elite business or rich IT professionals from Chennai/ Bangalore/Hyderabad Ct:7305010105

NAIDU GAVARA 24/157cms, Kettai, Viruchigam, Architect, MNC, 6.50 LPA, affluent family. Parents seeks well settled, professionally qualified groom. Contact: 9445045753

BALIJA NAIDU, Thiruvathurai/ Midhunam/ 27/165/MS / Canda PR/ Well Settled seeks Well qualified & Well settled groom from Canada. Caste No bar, Ct– 9840224474

URDU

Urdu Muslim, Good looking, Fair, 22/166, M.com seeks Educated & settled Groom. Contact: 9442600462, showhath@gmail.com

BUSINESS OFFERS

AGENTS WANTED

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sreevarahienterprises77@gmail.com

No vacation: When families migrate to the brick kilns for work, children accompany their parents to the site.

Balancing act: Dried bricks are stacked in piles before they are baked with fire.

Curious eyes: Children watch the progress of work at a brick kiln. Many of them come along with their parents to the kilns during the summer holidays but, at times, drop out of school if the work stretches on.

Heat hazard: A worker applies cow dung paste to a pile of bricks as they are roasted in a low fire.

Temporary shelter: Migrant workers with infants in their makeshift home.

Metro to have 16 interchange stations along with Majestic

The main aim of planning the interchange stations is to ensure that commuters can easily travel on any line, thereby increasing passenger reliance on the network for their daily commute, say BMRCL officials

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Apart from Nadaprabhu Kempegowda Interchange station in Majestic, the Bengaluru Metro will have 16 interchange metro stations in Bengaluru.

Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) officials said that in the upcoming Phase 2 and Phase 3 projects, there will be 16 interchange stations which will connect to various metro lines of the Namma Metro.

Currently, the Majestic interchange is the sole interchange metro station in the Namma Metro network, connecting the Purple and Green lines in the city. Around 50,000 passengers use this interchange station daily to switch between the Green and Purple lines. "The main aim of planning 16 interchange metro stations is to ensure that commuters can easily travel on any metro line, thereby increasing passenger reliance on the metro for their daily commute. In the coming years, these interchange stations will connect the Purple, Green, Yellow, Pink, and Blue lines of the metro," officials added.

The multi-level interchange Metro station at Jayadeva Junction on Bannerghatta Road, set to open at the end of this year, will be the largest in the city.

It will connect the Yellow and Pink lines of Namma Metro, serving as a pivotal point for both lines. This station will be a part of the Yellow Line from R.V. Road to Bommasandra and the Pink Line from Kalena Agrahara to Nagawara.

According to officials, the Yellow Line includes a double-decker flyover, with one level for road traffic and another for Metro trains. This design will allow people coming from the Ragigudda side to directly access Silk Board without stopping at any signal.

"The Jayadeva interchange station is scheduled to partially open when the Yellow Line inaugurates at the end of this year. It will become fully operational when the Pink Line, running from Kalena Agrahara to Nagawara, begins commercial operations," officials said.

The official said that following the Majestic interchange station, Jayadeva could potentially become the busiest metro interchange station in the future. Jayadeva station is expected to experience increased footfall as it connects two major metro lines.

"We are estimating that 80,000 to 90,000 passengers will be using this station when both the Yellow and Pink Lines open to the public," the official said.

Man accused of beheading minor girl in Kodagu arrested from jungle

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

The special team constituted by the Kodagu Police nabbed the accused in the gruesome murder of a minor girl in Kumbaragadige village of Somwarpet taluk, on Saturday.

The girl, who had just passed the SSLC examination the results of which were declared on Thursday, was engaged to Prakash the same day. But the family was advised against conducting the marriage of the girl as she was a minor which infuriated Prakash and he severed her head with a weapon.

Prakash

Gun recovered
The police which launched a manhunt for Prakash zeroed in on him in the jungles surrounding Kumbaragadige where the crime was committed, and overpowered him.

The severed head of the girl which was hidden in thicket was retrieved by the police who took Prakash into custody and questioned him.

The police also recovered the country made gun which was stolen from the girl's house. Superintendent of Police K. Ramarajan told media persons that Prakash has confessed to the crime and was in a rage over the postponement of the marriage. On learning of the development, Prakash rushed to the girl's parents Janaki and Subramani, and demanded that the marriage ceremony be solemnized immediately.

On being rebuffed, Prakash seized the machete kept in the house to slice tender coconut and slashed at Janaki and Subramani and inflicted injuries to them. Prakash also dragged the girl out of the house and severed her head in a fit of rage.

Police said Prakash had plans to kill the elder sister of the girl as he suspected that she was not only opposed to the marriage but had informed the Child Helpline.

But he shelved his plans on sighting security personnel surrounding the house at Garvale village and retreated to the jungles from where he was nabbed, said Mr. Ramarajan.

KAS officer's wife found dead at home

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 36-year-old advocate and wife of a Karnataka Administrative Services (KAS) officer was found dead at their house in Dollars colony in Sanjaynagar on Saturday. The deceased has been identified as Chaitra, wife of S.M. Shivakumar, working in KIADB.

The couple were married in 2016 and had a daughter. The incident came to light around 1 p.m. when Shivakumar, who had gone out, returned home and found her dead. The police shifted the body for post-mortem and conducted a spot inspection. The police recovered a death note from the scene stating that no one was responsible for her death and that she was taking the extreme step due to stress and depression.

Based on the complaint filed by the brother of the deceased, the police have registered a case of unnatural death and waiting post-mortem report to ascertain the cause of death. There were some doubts raised about the death note which was suspected to be written a few days ago. The death note in question has also been sent to FSL to ascertain whether there is any foul play, a senior police officer said.

(Those in distress or those having suicidal tendencies can call Arogya Sahayavani Ph.: 104 for help.)

Home-alone woman robbed, murdered

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 36-year-old home-alone woman was strangled and her gold chain was robbed at her house in Konasandra in Kengeri on Saturday.

According to the police, the deceased has been identified as Divya, a homemaker. Her husband Gurumurthy, who runs a salon, had gone to work.

According to the police, the assailant had gained entry on the pretext of checking the house on rent and killed her to rob her valuables.

The incident came to light when neighbours went to check on her and found her dead.

The Kengeri police are verifying CCTV camera footage from in and around the area to identify the accused .

Man arrested for stabbing
In another incident, the Srirampura police have arrested a 45-year-old man for allegedly murdering his friend over a financial row and dumping his body under a railway bridge on May 1.

The police recovered the highly decomposed body of Dilip, bike mechanic, from L.N. Pura and began to probe. Investigations revealed that Dilip had given ₹20,000 loan to his friend Vittal Pandu a few months ago and started demanding it back.

According to the police, Dilip harassed and humiliated Vittal. Unable to bear the harassment, Vittal decided to teach him a lesson and called Dilip on his phone and said he will return the money . On May 1, Vittal called Dilip to an isolated place near the railway bridge and threw chilli powder into Dilip's eyes as soon as he arrived to stop him from fleeing and stabbed him multiple times, killing him on the spot.

Man murdered
Meanwhile, a 27-year-old man was hacked to death by armed men in Doddaballapura on Friday.

The deceased has been identified as Hemanth Kumar, who was found dead by people on their morning walk and alerted the police. The police shifted the body for post-mortem. Initial probe revealed that Hemanth Kumar was murdered over old rivalry.

Man booked for forging certificates to get a job

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Cubbon Park police have registered a cheating and forgery complaint against a man who, using forged certificates from the Indian Institute of Architects, was working with a leading real estate company for the last five months .

The cheating came to light when the office, suspecting his credentials, submitted his educational certificates to the Council of Architecture for verification.

Verification revealed that the accused, identified as Vikram Telreja, had submitted the certificates originally belonging to Umith Shaini, a resident of Gurugram in Haryana. Vikram had forged his name and photo to apply for an architect's job in a leading real estate company on Vittal Mallya Road.

Further probe
Further probe by the council revealed that Vikram had obtained the certificates from Umith promosing him a job in Dubai and forged the same to apply for the job in Benglauru.

Based on the complaint filed by Deepak Kumar, Administrative Officer, Council Of Architecture , New Delhi, the Cubbon Park police have taken up a case and are looking out for the accused .

Prepaid smart electricity meters to be reality by Oct. 1

The process of setting up a digital system for the implementation has been delayed due to the model code of conduct which is in place for the Lok Sabha election

Jahnavi T. R.
BENGALURU

The Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission (KERC) had recently directed electricity supply companies (Escoms) to ensure that prepaid metering and self-billing digital systems are accessible to consumers from April 1 and June 1, respectively. However, consumers in the Bangalore Electricity Supply Company (Bescom) region have to now wait for a few more months before availing of these benefits.

While self-billing software may be available in another two or three months, Bescom officials have written to the KERC requesting time for the implementation of prepaid meters by October 1.

While procuring prepaid metres at the retail outlets of Escoms, consumers must pay fixed/demand charges as per the prevailing tariff rates and after that, they can recharge energy charges in the multiples of ₹100 when required.

"We had called for a tender in March to set up the system for the implementation of prepaid meters. However, the process had to be halted after the model code of conduct for the Lok Sabha election was announced. Now, we will only be able to call for a tender again after June 4. Then, it will take some time to finish the whole process. Hence, we have written to the KERC asking them to put off the implementation date to October 1," said a senior official from Bescom.

However, KERC officials said they had not received any communication from Bescom so far. "We had directed them to implement it from April 1, and if they fail to do it, then the Escom will lose out on the deposit money," said P. Ravikumar, KERC Chairman.

While self-billing has been existent for a few years now, in the tariff order, the KERC had asked Escoms to simplify the process by letting consumers upload a picture of their meter reading onto software and get their bill, rather than visiting the sub-division office to show the reading and getting the bill. For this, Bescom is facing server issues. "We recently moved servers and there are minor issues which are still being worked out. Once those are resolved, within two to three months, the software must be ready," said another senior official from Bescom.

How prepaid smart meters work

- Prepaid smart meters can be procured from Bescom retail outlets
- Consumers have to pay a minimum amount equivalent to fixed/demand charge and energy charges as per requirement
- They can recharge energy charges in multiples of ₹100 as and when required
- This is subjected to a minimum amount equivalent to one week's average consumption as recorded in the immediately preceding week or month
- There is no maximum cap for recharge
- Consumers can get energy consumption details and related data in real time on website, mobile app, etc.

KERC issues guidelines to upgrade digital meters to smart meters

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Smart modules should enable digital/static meters to communicate with systems, collect and transmit data remotely

Instead of purchasing new smart electricity meters, consumers across Karnataka will soon be able to upgrade their existing digital/static meters with suitable add-on modules and software.

In recently issued guidelines, the Karnataka Electricity Regulatory Commission (KERC) directed power utilities to explore the implementation of such modules for meters. While saving money for the consumers, distribution companies can enable enhanced metering capabilities, improve operational efficiency, and be better compliant with standards by effectively implementing smart modules to existing meters, KERC officials said.

"Instead of installing smart meters, a box-like apparatus (smart module) can be installed to the existing electricity meters (which have been installed in the last 20 years). This will greatly benefit electricity supply companies (escoms)," P. Ravikumar, Chairman, KERC, told *The Hindu*.

The KERC has specified that the upgraded meters should comply with IS 16444 (the standard for smart meters as per Bureau of Indian Standards). This means that the smart modules should enable digital/static meters to communicate with systems, collect and transmit data remotely, and support advanced metering functionalities such as real-time monitoring and energy management.

Before integrating the smart modules, escoms are also directed to check various factors like the age, condition, and technological obsolescence of the existing meters to check if they have sufficient operational life to justify the investment that is made in integrating smart modules.

Further, considering the installation charges, maintenance expenses, and potential revenue gains from the upgraded meters, the power utilities should also have to check the economic feasibility of the integration, before installation. While being compatible with the existing infrastructure and other systems, the KERC has also said that the add-on modules should be universally compatible in the operational area.

To avoid data theft, the commission has also directed power utilities to have in place encryption protocols and other cyber security measures.

The public can submit comments/objections regarding these guidelines to the secretary of KERC on or before May 15.

70-year-old biker killed in accident on highway

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 70-year-old motorcycle rider was killed on the spot when a Tamil Nadu-bound car knocked him down on the Hosakote-Devanahalli highway on Saturday.

The deceased was identified as Krishnappa, a resident of Yenagunte village who was returning home from Hosakote. The car, which was behind his bike, was allegedly being driven in a rash manner and knocked down the bike. As a result, Krishnappa was tossed in air and crashed on the concrete road and died with severe head injuries.

The front portion of the car was damaged in the accident. However the occupants of the car escaped unhurt.

The Sulibele police rushed to the spot, arrested the driver and seized the car for further investigations.

Citizens up in arms against BDA's plan to turn complexes into malls

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Bangalore Development Authority's (BDA) move to turn seven of its complexes in prime areas into high-rise shopping malls has triggered anger with citizens questioning the authority's failure to hold public consultation before taking such decisions.

The buildings, maintained by the BDA at prime locations, like Indiranagar, Koramangala, HSR Layout, R.T. Nagar, Vijayanagar, Sadashivanagar, and Austin Town will be demolished to pave the way for plush malls. The structures are leased to Bengaluru-based M-FAR developers, a consortium of Maverick Holdings and Embassy Group, which will redevelop the Indiranagar complex. The BDA is expected to earn ₹40 crore annually, about a 236% jump. According to sources, its annual earning at present stands at ₹ 11 crore.

The BDA will be collecting 30% from the total revenue of the developer in six places and 35% from Indiranagar. The lease period with the developers is 60 years. The residents of Koramangala, HSR Layout, and Indiranagar have raised red flags against the project, which they term as privatisation of BDA properties. Residents are also concerned about various other issues arising out of shopping malls in these areas that have turned commercial hubs, illegally in many cases.

The BDA plans to collect 30% from the total revenue of the developer in six places. The lease period with the developers is 60 years. FILE PHOTO

The conversion of complexes into four floor to 10 floor malls will increase the burden of traffic, consumption of electricity, water, noise pollution, waste management and others, said Swarna Venkataraman, member of I Change Indiranagar. The very fact that the BDA has not followed due process of holding public consultation is outrageous, she added. She added that Indiranagar is already a developed area with multiple malls, shopping and entertainment complexes.

The HSR Layout Residents Welfare Association and Federation of HSR are drafting a letter of objection to the project. "The BDA complex here is located adjacent to a school. With the emergence of a mall, the children will have to bear the brunt of commercialisation," said Shanti Tummala, a resident.

"The malls may have paid parking areas, but as is seen now, the cars will be parked in the residential lanes and by-lanes making it difficult for residents to move around ," another resident pointed out..

A resident from Koramangala who did not wish to be named termed the idea of a new mall in the area a joke. "Koramangala is already saturated with malls, pubs, apartments and other shopping establishments. The new mall will increase consumption of electricity at whose cost? The residents will have to face power cuts just to provide supply to the mall, which is unnecessary. The BDA has to hold public consultations and withdraw this project," said the resident. On Saturday, Aam Admi Party held a press meet opposing the project.

BDA Commissioner, N. Jayaram was not available for response.

Teams deployed to clear trees and branches

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

With the recent rainfall after a long dry spell bringing several trees and branches crashing down, resulting in traffic disruptions, the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) has introduced five bike-borne teams to attend to tree and branch falls during the monsoon.

This is the first time the BBMP is deploying such teams in Bengaluru.

The aim is to clear trees and branches from roads in a speedy manner as bikes can wade through the traffic faster. Each bike is assigned to two persons. The workers will use tree and branch cutting machines to cut them to move out of the roads, the civic body said in a release.

The release said the civic body is fully prepared to tackle problems arising from rains in the city. The BBMP has deployed two cranes and two earthmovers in place and eight tractors to transport the logs and branches.

The BBMP has eight dumping yards in eight zones and has identified six more yards to dump logs and branches, the release added. According to the data shared by the civic body, the BBMP till Saturday had cleared 271 trees and 483 branches.

TENDER NOTICE

Number: SSSCT/Proc/24-25/E&P/016 Dated:09-05-2024

Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust, Prasanthi Nilayam Invites Tenders For **Structural Work Of Dormitory Cum Rooms Block At Prasanthi Nilayam.**

Tender document can be downloaded from:
https://tenders.sssct.org/Structural_Work_of_New_Dormitory_Block_at_PSN.pdf

Last Date for Submission of Tender is 23rd May-2024

SRI SATHYA SAI CENTRAL TRUST, PRASANTHI NILAYAM.

Timings
BENGALURU

SUNDAY, MAY. 12
RISE 05:55 SET 18:37
RISE 09:33 SET 22:56

MONDAY, MAY. 13
RISE 05:55 SET 18:37
RISE 10:29 SET 23:45

TUESDAY, MAY. 14
RISE 05:55 SET 18:37
RISE 11:24 SET 00:00

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	35	27
Mysuru	35	24
Bengaluru	32	22

Bengaluru Today
35°C Morning will be pleasant Day will be warm and uneasy. Night also will be comfortable. Chances of thunderstorm.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
35°C Weather will be warm with uneasy afternoon. Night will comfortable. Short spell of light rain and thundershower may occur at some places.

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THE HINDU
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IN THE COURT OF THE 3RD ADDITIONAL SENIOR CIVIL JUDGE, BANGALORE
MC No. 441/2023

BETWEEN:
Sri. Nikhil Gopinath, S/o Sri. K.M. Gopinadhan. .....Petitioner

AND
Smt. CHAITRA RAJAN,
W/o Sri. Nikhil Gopinath. .....Respondent

NOTICE TO RESPONDENT

Smt. CHAITRA RAJAN, W/o Sri. Nikhil Gopinath, D/o Sri. Rajan,Aged 36 Years, Flat No.C-2135, Assets 63 Degree East, Chikkanahalli, Carmelaram post, Bangalore-560035
Also at: 'Kedaram 'Kokkanisseri, Payyanur, Kannur, Kerala-670307

Whereas the Petitioner has filed a petition against you under section 13 (1) (ia) of the Hindu Marriage Act for the Decree of divorce to dissolve the marriage solemnised between the Petitioner and the Respondent on 31/10/2009 at Sree Prabha Kalyana Mandapam, Payyanur Municipality, Kerala, Registered on 07/11/2009 before the registrar of Hindu Marriages, Payyanur Municipality, Kerala, the said case stands posted to 07/06/2024.

You are hereby directed to appear before this Hon'ble court (3rd Additional Senior Civil Judge, Bangalore) **at 11.00 am on 7/6/2024** in person or through duly instructed Advocate failing in which the petition will be allowed. Which matter will be decided Ex-party.

Given under my hand seal of this the **4th day of April 2024.**

BY ORDER OF THE COURT
CHIEF MINISTERIAL OFFICER
Senior Civil Judge Court,
Bengaluru Rural Dist, Bengaluru
Advocate for the Petitioner
Adv C V Siju,
M/s LawLinks, No.305, 3rd Floor, Sophias Choice, St. Marks Road, Bangalore 560001
Mob.no. 9845062318/9902062318
E-mail: advcvsiju@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform general public that my client/s have negotiated to purchase the Schedule Property from its owners **(1) Sri.NARAYAN KRISHNA**, S/o. Late K.Narayanan, Aged about 68 years, **(2) Smt.LATHA MAHADEVAN,** W/o. Late N.Mahadevan, Aged about 62 years, **(3) Sri.NARAYANAN MAHADEVAN,** S/o. Late N.Mahadevan, Aged about 35 years, All are Residing at No.133, 10th Cross Road, Indiranagar 1st Stage, Bangalore -560 038, on the representation made by them that they are the true and absolute joint owners of the **SCHEDULE PROPERTY** and that they have acquired the same by virtue of an Registered Auction Sale Deed (Building) dated 8th February 2024, Registered as Document No.BDA-1-03444/2023-24, of Book-1, dated 9th February 2024, Registered in the office of the District Registrar, Bangalore Urban District, from the Bangalore Development Authority (Earlier Known as the City Improvement Trust Board) and that they have not entered into any manner of transactions in respect of the said property and that the same is free from all manner of Liens, Charges, Court litigations, minor claims or any manner of encumbrances.Any person/s claiming any manner of right, title or interest in the SCHEDULE PROPERTY shall lodge their claim in writing with supporting documents **within 15 days,** after the publication of this notice, to the undersigned, failing which, my client/s shall proceed with the transaction to acquire the SCHEDULE PROPERTY from the aforesaid owners and their family members and subsequent claims will not be entertained thereafter.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

ALL THAT PIECE AND PARCEL of the Immoveable Property being **Premises No.133, in Binnamangala Layout, now known as Indiranagar Layout, Bangalore – 560 038,** sanctioned by the CITB, Now assigned New Municipal No.133, Binnamangala 1st Stage, Bangalore, Now falling within the folds of BBMP Ward No.82 and assigned New PID No.82-1-133, Bangalore and measuring East to West: 61 Feet 6 Inches or 18.7757 Meters and North to South: 40 Feet or 12.1920 Meters and totally measuring 2460 Square Feet or 228.9140 Square Meters, together with a building measuring 1400 Square Feet or 130.0642 Square Meters in the Ground Floor and 1538 Square Feet or 142.8848 Square Meters in the First Floor and bounded as follows:

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VELLANKI RAVI, ADVOCATE
321, 1 st Floor, C.M.H. Road, Indiranagar
Bangalore – 560 038, Tel: 98441 21658 (Mobile)

Dated:11-05-2024
Bangalore

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I, CHIKKAMMA, r/at D.No.174, Janatha Colony, Gidadakonenahalli, Magadi Main Road, Vishwaneedam Post, Bengaluru 560091 state vide affidavt that both names Chikkamma and Gowramma belongs to me only, vide affidavit dtd 14.03.2024 sworn before Notary H.R. Karunaka, Bluru

LEGAL NOTICE

IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUDICATURE AT MADRAS
(Ordinary Original Civil Jurisdiction)
O.A. Nos. 996 & 997 of 2023
IN
A.No. 6207 of 2023
IN
C.S. (Commercial Division) No. 284 of 2023
M/s. Kaleesuwari Refinery Private Limited, ... Applicant / Plaintiff
-Versus-
H.K.Global Enterprises, ... Respondent / Defendant

To
H.K.Global Enterprises,
TR Layout, Magadi Town,
Near BGS College,
Ramanagara District - 562 120

Please take notice that the above-named Applicant / Plaintiff has filed the above mentioned O.A. Nos. 996 & 997 of 2023 IN A.No. 6207 of 2023 IN C.S. (Com.Div) No. 284 of 2023 before the Hon'ble court, the matter came up for hearing 24.04.2024 and the Hon'ble court directed to effect paper publication in an English daily namely "The Hindu" and also in one popular news paper in Kannada for hearing of the matter on 07.06.2024. Therefore, be present on 07.06.2024 either in person or through your counsel failing which the matter will be heard and decided in your absence at your risk and cost.

VIJAYAN SUBRAMANIAN
COUNSEL FOR APPLICANT / PLAINTIFF

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GENERAL

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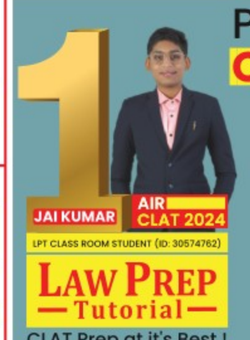

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My son is going to build his future based on the decisions he makes today. I am thankful to *The Hindu* for providing a platform for personal interaction with college admission staff. It is very important in shaping my son's future decisions.

ANAND KUMAR, parent

We are from outside the city. So coming to this event has helped us get access to many colleges at once. We appreciate the opportunity to explore various educational avenues in one place.

PRERANA KAMLE AND HER FATHER, KRISHNAMURTHY KAMLE

Hearing from subject experts helps us to understand the field better, and take an informed decision. The counselling event helped me get some clarity about the career paths.

ANIRUDH DEEPAK, 12th grade student, engineering aspirant

The talks gave me a chance to explore the fields outside of my own domain. I have a younger brother, so what I learn here not only helps me but him as well.

RACHANA S. L., 12th grade graduate, medical aspirant

Even though we get more admissions through online platforms, events like these are still important in helping us spread awareness about things that people don't have access to digitally.

ANUSHA KOTIYAL, Admission Head, Alliance University

In-person interactions with parents and students help us build a better rapport, which in turn helps us analyse the feedback better.

HARINATH S., Admission Counsellor at Ramaiah University

Events like these provide us with the opportunity to interact with a diverse group of people and work on our networking. It also helps us gain perspective on which courses students want, and get to know their requirements.

BHAVYA SAGAR G., Education Counsellor, S-Vyasa Deemed-to-be-University

'Branch or college immaterial nowadays as engineering has become interdisciplinary'

Hundreds of students, especially the ones who wanted to pursue engineering and medical streams, found clarity about their career path at The Hindu Education Plus Career Counselling in Bengaluru

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

(From left) Bhargavi V.R., professor and director Postgraduate Department of Commerce Seshadripuram College; Soubhagya S. Beelagimath, AIR 101 UPSC CSE 2023; Yeshwanth Grukar, executive director, Centre for Smart Governance Department of P&A Reformer (e-Gov); Vidhyashankar S.,Vice-Chancellor, Visvesvaraya Technological University; Riyaz Basha Sardar, Registar (Evaluation) RGUHS; Uttam Kumar Badiger, Senior Assistant Karnataka Examination Authority; Ameen-e-Mudassar, founder and CEO CIGMA International Career Counsellor, and Sangappa S.B., National Executive Council Member, ISTE, New Delhi, during the career counselling programme in Bengaluru on Saturday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

"The branches or colleges are immaterial nowadays as engineering has become interdisciplinary. Moreover, umpteen sources of content are available on the internet by good colleges and teachers. You can become a computer science engineer even if you have joined mechanical, electrical, or civil engineering. If you have the hunger to learn, you can become an engineer and work in any branch you want. So, do not be fond of only computer science engineering as it is difficult to switch to branches like mechanical or civil after that," said Vidyashankar. S, Vice Chancellor, Visvesvaraya Technological University (VTU), Belagavi.

He was the guest of honour at the 22nd edition of The Hindu Education Plus Career Counselling, as the second event in Bengaluru was held on Saturday held at Sri Jagadguru Renukacharya College.

The event was a huge success as hundreds of students, especially the ones who wanted to pursue engineering and medical streams, found clarity about their career path after finishing their 10th and II PUC/12th grade examinations.

Diverse panel

Some students and parents even travelled from farther parts of the city to listen to the diverse panel of speakers. From science, and commerce to civil services and other professional courses, students and parents got a chance to understand the prospects of those streams while also clearing their doubts about the same.

Make your own future

Emphasising on the importance of making the best of the available opportunities, Yeshwanth Gurukar, IAS officer and Executive Director, Centre for Smart Governance, Department of P&A Reforms (e-Gove), said that students should look beyond academics and marks to build a good future.

"Everything is rapidly changing these days. Succeeding in life is different from academics. Your life skills are very important as your future will be built on them and your integrity. The kind of service you provide other people in life is what matters. Hence, have clarity, confidence and conviction in your life," Mr. Gurukar said.

He also said that it is important to have alternate career options especially if you work in the private sector.

Students and parents at The Hindu Education Plus Career Counselling in Bengaluru on Saturday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

One of the most inspiring speeches of the day was delivered by Soubhagya. S. Beelagimath, who secured an All India Ranking of 101 in UPSC Civil Service Examinations 2023. Ms. Beelagimath fondly recalled how even she was among the audience at *The Hindu* Career Counselling event in Davanagare in 2018. While narrating how she went from looking to pursue a medical career to getting an agricultural science degree to clearing UPSC examinations, she stressed on the importance of following one's own passion instead of giving heed to others' opinions.

"Do not let others decide your career as ultimately you are the one who will pursue it. If you choose your path based on others' opinions, then you will regret it throughout your life," she said.

She also provided a few tips to those who want to write UPSC exams: "Do not think that only coaching centres can help as I did self-study. Do not underestimate or overestimate UPSC examinations. Instead of choosing an optional paper for main exams going by statistics, analyse your interests and then decide."

Allied Health Sciences

Riyaz Basha Sardar, registrar (Evaluation), Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences (RGUHS) urged students to explore scholarship options before choosing career paths only based on economic angles. While providing students with a basic understanding of medical courses and qualification exams like NEET, Dr. Sardar spoke about how Allied Health Sciences like physiotherapy and lab technology are in great demand now.

"Allied Health Sciences is the most upcoming field now as doctors cannot work alone anymore. They need the help of many other tools and technicians. Hence, those who want to be close to the healthcare stream but cannot get into medicine can choose these courses. If they pursue post-graduation, they can either practise, teach or even go into administration," he explained.

Skill based learning

Bhargavi. V.R., professor and director, Postgraduate Department of Commerce, Seshadripuram College, said that knowledge, application, reflection, skills and abilities is important for students to have, irrespective of the stream they have chosen.

While shedding light on various career options available in Commerce and Management, she said, "By the time the students join the workforce, you should have a skill set that will be apt for 2030.

"Such skills include green skills, digital skills and metacognitive skills among others."

From a student who wanted to know how to pursue veterinary sciences to parents who had multiple queries about competitive exams like CET and NEET, cleared many of their doubts with Uttam Kumar Badiger, Senior Assistant, Karnataka Examinations Authority, who patiently answered all the questions.

Further, Ameen. E. Mudassar, Founder and CEO, CIGMA International Career Counsellor, spoke to students about how to select a career.

He had four points: self-assessment, career exploration, decision making, and taking action.

He also educated students about unique professional courses available like sports management, financial analysis, actuarial sciences, and packaging technology.

Rain wreaks havoc in Hubballi and Dharwad

The Hindu Bureau
HUBBALLI

Unakal cross in Hubballi inundated by rainwater. KIRAN BAKALE

Downpour coupled with gusty winds wreaked havoc in twin cities of Hubballi-Dharwad on Saturday evening, leading to flooding, trees being uprooted and rain and drain water entering households in low-lying areas of the twin cities.

The downpour, however, brought down the soaring temperature providing relief to the residents who were facing hardships due to the rising heat. The downpour also resulted in power outage for few hours.

The downpour started in the evening with heavy winds and lasted for almost an hour, throwing life out of gear.

Several roads in the central business district of Hubballi, particularly localities around Dajibanpet witnessed flooding, leaving the roads unmotorable. Knee-deep water in these localities also entered several commercial establishments. At Hosur rainwater entered several shops and commercial establishments.

At Channapet area in Hubballi, heavy rain resulted in sewage water entering the households. The residents had a tough time throwing out the sewage water and saving their household articles. At Lingarajnagar in Hubballi, a huge tree uprooted blocking the road for few hours.

Several traffic junctions in Hubballi and Dharwad remained inundated resulting in traffic chaos. Toll Naka in Dharwad, Unakal Cross and Hosur Cross in Hubballi remained inundated due to the downpour. Consequently there was traffic jam in these and adjoining localities.

In Dharwad, trees were uprooted near DIMHANs and Azad Nagar. The uprooted trees also severed electricity lines resulting in power outage in the city. Personnel from the municipal corporation and HESCOM had a tough time clearing the roads.

The scaffolding erected for the construction work on sports complex near Central Library in Dharwad also collapsed duet to the gusty winds. It collapsed on a private bus parked next to it.

K.C. General Hospital wins appreciation for linking highest number of health records during a month-long drive

Afshan Yasmeen
BENGALURU

The State-run K.C. General Hospital has won appreciation for linking the highest number of health records of patients to their Ayushman Bharat Health Accounts (ABHAs) and generating 'Scan and Share' tokens during a month-long digital health drive in the State. 'Scan and Share' is a QR code-based Fast Track Queue System for patient registration.

The hospital has linked 65,623 health records and generated 45,641 'Scan and Share' tokens during the Digital Health Marathon conducted between February 7 and April 6.

While K.C. General Hospital is followed by C.V. Raman General Hospital and Jayanagar General Hospital in terms of linking health records, Jayanagar General Hospital and Tumakuru District Hospital are in the second and third place respectively in the category of issuing 'Scan and Share' tokens.

State Health Commissioner Randeep D., who issued appreciation letters to the top three best-performing hospitals in each category, told *The Hindu* on Saturday that the Digital Health Marathon was announced to encourage and incentivise hospitals to take up the creation of digital patient records and enable faster queue management under the 'Scan and Share' feature of Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission.

Health records

Karnataka, which has so far linked personal health records of over 1.14 crore patients with their ABHAs, has so far created 2.73 crore ABHAs. With this, Karnataka is now in the ninth position in terms of ABHAs created in the country. Of the total 61.09 crore ABHAs created in the country, Uttar Pradesh is the highest contributor with 9.78 crore as of Saturday.

The State continues to top the country with 49,269 verified health facilities registered in its Health Facility Registry (HFR). Likewise, with 46,673 verified healthcare professionals in its Health Professionals Registry (HPR), the State is in the third position after Uttar Pradesh and Andhra Pradesh that have 52,709 and 49,236 verified health professionals respectively in its HPR, according to the ABDM dashboard launched by the National Health Authority (NHA).

Scan and Share

Karnataka is also in the third position in the country in the 'Scan and Share' category, This facility, which is being used in around 300 hospitals - including nearly 30 private facilities across the State - it has so far benefitted nearly 37.39 lakh patients coming to the Out Patient Department to share their demographic and personal details with the hospital just by scanning the code. This has helped reduce long queues. Of the total 2.72 crore tokens issued in the country, Uttar Pradesh is the highest contributor with 85.22 lakh followed by Andhra Pradesh with 48.75 lakh.

Although the system was first introduced in C.V. Raman General hospital in the State, K.C. General hospital is now topping the list for issuing the highest number of tokens (1.89 lakh) so far.

While Jayanagar General hospital follows K.C. General with 1.76 lakh tokens issued under the 'Scan and Share' facility, C.V. Raman is in the third position with 80,269 tokens issued to date, according to the ABDM dashboard.

Book release programme today

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Two Kannada books – a collection of poems and songs, and a meditation on poetry– written by poet, playwright, and stage director Raghunandana will be released in Bengaluru on Sunday.

Literary critic Rajendra Chenni and stage director B.R. Venkataramana Aithala will release the books and speak about them. *Naanu Saththamele*, published by Chaarumathi Prakashana, is a poetry collection of 170 pages containing Raghunandana's poems, his translations of poems from English and Urdu, and songs and poems for 12 plays that he has written or adapted into Kannada from other languages. *Tuytavella Navyadatta: Andattara Uyyaale... Maththu Adara Suththa*, published by Theatre Tatkal Books, runs into 270 pages. The book release programme will be held at Suchitra Auditorium, at 11 a.m.

Published by Nirmala Lakshman at No 19&21, Bhagwan Mahaveer Road, Bengaluru-560001 and Printed by C. Sridhar at Plot No. 13-D, Bommasandra-Jigani Link Road, KIADB Industrial Area, Bommasandra, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru-560099 on behalf of THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., Chennai-600002. Editor: Suresh Nambath (Responsible for selection of news under the PRP Act).
ISSN 0971 - 751X

Council elections: BJP springs a surprise at its ally JD(S)

Party names candidates for five of the six Legislative Council seats going to the polls; this came hours after Yediyurappa announced that BJP and JD(S) will contest four and two seats, respectively

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU/MYSURU

Hours after the former Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa announced in Mysuru that the NDA partners BJP and Janata Dal (Secular) will contest four and two seats, respectively, in the upcoming Legislative Council elections for six seats, the BJP sprung a surprise by naming its candidate to one of the two seats that was to be left for the regional party.

The fresh development between the alliance partner comes amid the sexual abuse case, allegedly involving Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna, casting its shadow on the alliance.

The contentious seat

While JD(S) sources said that in all earlier discussions, it had been decided that the regional party would be allowed to contest in Karnataka South-west Teachers' and Karnataka South Teachers' constituencies that the party held, the BJP on Saturday evening announced E.C. Ningaraju as its candidate from South Teachers' constituency. Hours earlier, Mr. Yediyurappa had said that the constituencies were yet to be finalised in the seat-sharing arrangement. The JD(S) was preparing to field its former MLC K.T. Srikante Gowda (who had earlier represented South Graduates' constituency) in the South Teachers' constituency. "The talks on seat sharing had been done during the finalisation of the candidate for the Bangalore Teachers' constituency byelection earlier this year," said a source. He added that it had renominated S.L. Bhoje Gowda in the South-west Teachers' constituency.

Elections for six seats of the Legislative Council will be held on June 3. FILE PHOTO

Hopeful of discussion

Expressing surprise at the BJP's decision to field its candidate in a constituency held by the JD(S), party sources said the BJP could be under pressure from within to field its candidate. "However, we are going to raise the issue and we are confident that the seat will be ultimately left to us." Incidentally, Congress candidate in the South Teachers' constituency Marithibbe Gowda had won on the JD(S) ticket four times. He had distanced himself from the party for over a year and joined the Congress in March 2024.

The biennial elections to the State Legislative Council are scheduled to be held on June 3 and the last date for filing nomination is May 16. The six constituencies going to polls are Karnataka North-east Graduates', Karnataka South-west Graduates', Bangalore Graduates', Karnataka South-east Teachers', Karnataka South-west Teachers', and Karnataka South Teachers' constituencies. This will be the second major electoral test for the alliance after the Lok Sabha elections where BJP and JD(S) contested 25 and three seats, respectively. In the first polls post the alliance, the NDA had lost in Bangalore Teachers' seat when the JD (S) nominee was defeated by the Congress candidate P. Puttanna in February 2024

Earlier in the day, Mr. Yediyurappa told reporters in Mysuru that the BJP-JD (S) alliance in the State would continue in the Legislative Council polls and a decision had been taken for the BJP to contest in four seats, leaving the remaining two for the JD(S). "The BJP-JD(S) alliance will not be disturbed for any reason. The alliance will continue," he said.

BJP nominees for Council seats

- Karnataka North-east Graduates: **Amarnath Patil**
- Karnataka South-west Graduates: **Dhananjaya Sarji**
- Bangalore Graduates: **A. Deve Gowda**
- Karnataka South-east Teachers: **Y.A. Narayanaswamy**
- Karnataka South Teachers: **E.C. Ningaraju**

House composition

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Legislative Council election is being keenly watched as the composition of the 75-member Upper House, where the BJP-JD(S) commands a majority, could change if the Congress performs well in the polls.

While the NDA has 39 members – 32 of the BJP and seven of the JD(S), the Congress has 29 members besides an Independent and the Chairman. Five seats, including three to be elected from the Legislative Assembly, and two going for elections on June 3, are vacant. Of the six going for polls, BJP and JD(S) had won three and two seats, respectively, while the Congress had won one seat in the 2018 polls.

Mr. Yediyurappa's statement assumed significance in the light of JD(S) leader and former Chief Minister H.D. Kumaraswamy having left the decision on the continuation of the alliance to BJP central leaders after the alleged sexual abuse case broke out.

Govt. seeks relaxation of model of conduct to take up drought relief

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Karnataka government has appealed to the Election Commission of India (EC) to relax the model code of conduct (MCC) that is in force for the Lok Sabha election to enable it to start holding meetings to take up relief measures in drought-hit taluks.

Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda and Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Priyank Kharge have urged the EC to relax the MCC in the State. Karnataka completed voting for the Lok Sabha election on May 7. The MCC, however, will remain in force till the declaration of results on June 4.

Delayed monsoon likely

In his letter to Chief Electoral Officer for Karnataka Manoj Kumar Meena, Mr. Kharge said the State had declared 223 out of the 236 taluks as drought-hit. He cited a report from the India Meteorological Department warning that Karnataka was likely to face a delayed south-west monsoon this year.

"The drinking water situation is deteriorating in all taluks. It is necessary to manage the supply of clean drinking water to citizens and animals over the next two months," Mr. Kharge said.

Revenue Minister Krishna Byre Gowda and Rural Development and Panchayat Raj Minister Priyank Kharge

The government has sought the EC's permission for Ministers to chair meetings related to drought and drinking water supply

He sought the commission's permission for Ministers to chair meetings related to drought and drinking water supply. He demanded relaxation of the MCC to hold meetings with officials and to make decisions.

A couple of days ago, Mr. Gowda had said that the drinking water situation was "under control", though drought situation was still persisting.

"In 270 villages, water is being supplied through tankers. Private borewells are being used in 594 villages," Mr. Gowda said. In urban areas, 150 wards are getting water through tankers and through private borewells in 29 wards, he said.

Need to hold meetings

The Revenue Minister has also sought the Election Commission's permission to hold meetings with Deputy Commissioners.

"While districts across the State have received rain during the last 10 to 15 days, which has brought some relief, we need to be cautious for another month," Mr. Gowda said.

The NDA government has released ₹3,454 crore drought relief under the National Disaster Response Fund (NDRF) as against the demand for ₹18,172 crore, following a petition filed by Karnataka in the Supreme Court. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has said the amount released was not even a quarter of what the Centre was supposed to release as per the NDRF norms.

Krishna continues to be stable in ICU

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Veteran politician and former Karnataka Chief Minister S.M. Krishna, who was hospitalised on April 29 for treatment of a minor ailment, continues to be in the ICU under the care of a critical care team.

According to a statement from Manipal Hospitals, where the 91-year-old has been admitted, he is on adequate life support and his condition is stable.

The former Union Minister is being treated under Satyanarayana Mysore, HOD and consultant-pulmonology and lung transplant physician, and a team of medical experts.

"His condition is stable and he continues to be under treatment in the ICU," Dr. Mysore said.

S.M. Krishna

Green pastures

A shepherd sits in the shade of an umbrella while his flock of sheep grazes at a paddy field on a hot summer day at Keragodu village in Mandya district. BHAGYA PRAKASH K.

Devaraje Gowda remanded in judicial custody for 14 days

The Hindu Bureau
SHIVAMOGGA

BJP leader G. Devaraje Gowda, who was arrested in Chitradurga district on Friday evening, has been remanded in judicial custody for 14 days.

The Holenarsipur police, who arrested him on the charge of sexual assault, presented him before the Additional Civil Judge and JMFC at Holenarsipur on Saturday evening. The judge remanded him in 14 days judicial custody.

A team of police officers from Hassan brought him to Holenarsipur on Saturday morning.

Mr. Devaraje Gowda, 49, an advocate, contested the Assembly election from Holenarsipur on the BJP ticket in 2023. He lost the election to former Minister H.D. Revanna. In recent months, he claimed he possessed videos and photos related to Hassan MP Prajwal Revanna. However, when video clips and photos went viral through pen drives and messaging applications last month ahead of the polling, he alleged that Congress leaders were behind the act.

Civil society groups protest against EC

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Demanding that Prime Minister Narendra Modi be barred from campaigning for 96 hours and an FIR lodged against him for his alleged hate speeches, several civil society groups on Saturday undertook a nationwide joint campaign, including in Karnataka, to demand action from the Election Commission of India, with the slogan "Grow a spine or resign".

The activists in Bengaluru submitted a memorandum to the office of the Chief Electoral Officer for Karnataka holding the EC accountable for its "inaction" against violations of the MCC and laws during the Lok Sabha elections.

"In Karnataka, we had complained to the CEO about the BJP's animated video clip on Muslim reservation and had demanded that it should be taken down. Although an FIR was filed, it was taken down only after the elections in Karnataka. During the Lok Sabha poll campaign there were several hate speeches by BJP members which should have been taken cognizance of by the EC. We had demanded that the BJP Karnataka handle should be stopped from posting on social media. But, none of our demands were looked into," said Vinay Sreenivasa, member of Bahutva Karnataka that was part of the joint campaign.

He alleged the EC has been acting only against MCC violations by Opposition parties and letting the ruling party off the hook.

Joint complaint

A joint complaint was submitted through the offices of the Chief Electoral Officers in Ahmedabad, Mumbai, and Hyderabad, among others, and a letter was also submitted to the office of the Chief Election Commissioner in Delhi. This collective of organisations and concerned citizens also undertook a postcard campaign in which hundreds of postcards were sent to the Election Commission of India, Delhi, from various cities containing the image of a spine – thereby demanding the EC to "grow a spine or resign".

"The Prime Minister has made several speeches which pit communities against one another and promote hatred between communities on religious lines. This amounts to a violation of the MCC, amounts to a corrupt practice under the Representation of the People Act and is a violation of the EC's advisory to political parties. So far Mr. Modi, who is a star campaigner, has not even been served a notice," the letter to EC said. It added that "no action had been taken against the BJP for distorting points from Opposition parties' manifestos as well".

People from various walks of life came together for a campaign on Saturday as part of which postcards were sent to the Election Commission of India seeking action against MCC violations and hate speeches during poll campaign. K. MURALI KUMAR

Central Silk Board celebrates National Technology Day

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Central Silk Board's Central Silk Technological Research and Training Institute, Bengaluru, on Saturday celebrated National Technology Day on the theme 'From schools to start-ups: Igniting young minds to innovate'. The day is celebrated to commemorate Pokhran II – the nuclear tests conducted by India in 1998.

As a part of the celebrations, CSB-CSTRI invited textile students, fashion designers, research scholars, and entrepreneurs in the textile sector to attend the National Technology Day-cum-workshop at Central Silk Board, Bengaluru, according to a release.

Silk board's role

P. Sivakumar, Member Secretary, Central Silk Board, elaborated on the contribution of the Central Silk Board to improve the livelihood of sericulture-dependents and the role of CSB's research institutes in implementing various technologies for increasing the quality and quantity of silk.

Interaction needed

S. Periyasamy, Director, CSTRI, Bengaluru, highlighting the contributions of the CSTRI in the post-cocoon sector over the decades, pointed out the need for regular interaction with industry stakeholders and entrepreneurs for better R&D interventions. Officials of Central Silk Board, CSTRI, Textile Engineering and Fashion Design students from various colleges in Bengaluru, sericulture stakeholders, and research scholars participated in the programme, the release stated.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

REMEMBRANCE

PRS GROUP

"In our collective strength, lies the power to transform dreams into reality and build a world where every voice is heard and every human is valued" - P. Ratnaswamy

Reflecting on this day, the 34th year of remembrance, we pay tribute to the enduring impact and profound legacy left by our founder.

Sri. P. RATNASWAMY (PRS)
(1920-1990)
Founder: PRS Group, Trivandrum

Family members & staff of: PRS BUILDERS | PRS HOSPITAL
KALYAN HOSPITAL | SWAGATH HOLIDAY RESORT | KALYAN SCHOOL
PRS COLLEGE OF NURSING | PRS RETAIL

Modi will finish his third term as PM: Shah

The BJP leader claims that the party will win more than 200 seats in the first three phases of polling, sweep A.P. and win 10 seats in Telangana; adds Modi government has fulfilled 92% of the promises made in the previous two polls and clarifies that BJP is against religion-based quotas only

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

Union Home Minister and BJP leader Amit Shah has exuded confidence that the party would emerge as the single largest party in the southern States after the Lok Sabha election. "After the end of three phases of polling for Lok Sabha, I can say that we are going to win more than 200 seats. The fourth phase is critical and we are receiving good reports. We are going to sweep Andhra Pradesh along with our allies and also win at least 10 seats in Telangana," he said a press conference on Saturday.

Poll pitch: Amit Shah and G. Kishan Reddy addressing a press meet in Hyderabad on Saturday. G. RAMAKRISHNA

Overall, the party is sure to win over 400 seats as the people of the country have decided to give Prime Minister Narendra Modi another term in office. "Mr. Modi will complete the third entire term and there is no confusion in the party about it," he asserted, when asked if he would take over as PM mid-term.

Mr. Shah clarified that his party was against religion-based quotas only. Any person from any religion be it Hindus, Muslims or Sikhs can find a place among the OBCs provided a proper socio-economic survey was done to determine the backwardness of that particular caste.

'Fulfilled promises'

Mr. Shah claimed that the Modi government has fulfilled 92% of the promises made in the previous two elections and is well on course to take the country towards the path of progress and development in all spheres even while ensuring the internal and external security is strengthened to deal with terrorism and extremism.

"The choice between the electorate is very clear – between corrupt, dynastic and vote bank politics of INDIA bloc and the NDA/BJP led by Mr. Modi against whom there is not even a 25 paise corruption charge during his years as Gujarat Chief Minister and now as PM," he declared.

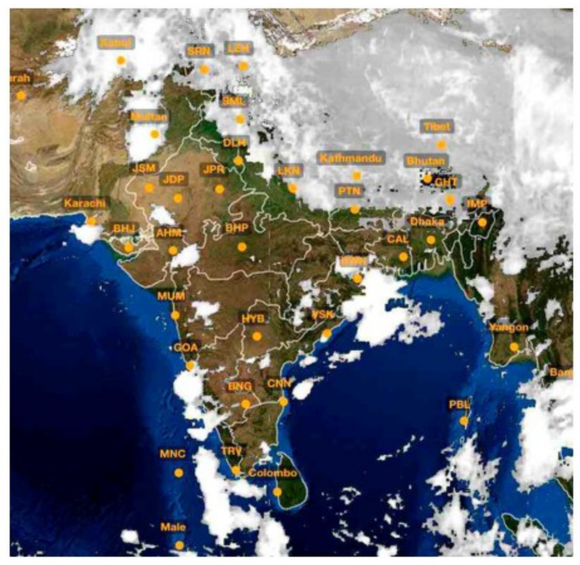
Referring to Telangana, he said both the BRS and Congress are the same, in being corrupt and dynastic and also in bowing to All India Majlis-E-Ittehadul Muslimeen leader (Asaduddin) Owaisi. "If the BRS rule had pushed Telangana into a huge debt, the Revanth Reddy government has been funding the entire Congress party campaign for the Parliament polls having become an ATM," he alleged.

Mr. Shah also questioned why the Congress government has been unable to take up farm loan waiver, scholarships for youth, and financial assistance to women and others after promising to do the same by Sonia Gandhi's birthday, after it came to power in December.

He also said the country will never give up Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) even though the Congress leaders, whether it is Mani Shankar Aiyar or others, have a different opinion due to 'appeasement' and 'vote bank politics'.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Sunday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Odisha, Telangana, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala and interior Karnataka. Thunderstorm with lightning/gusty winds likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Jharkhand, coastal Karnataka and Lakshadweep

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	3	31.5	22.9	Kozhikode	—	37.3	28.7
Ahmedabad	—	41.6	28.8	Kurnool	—	40.2	28.5
Aizawl	26	29.0	17.4	Lucknow	—	35.0	27.2
Allahabad	—	39.6	27.8	Madurai	10	37.2	25.1
Bengaluru	—	32.6	21.0	Mangaluru	—	34.8	27.5
Bhopal	—	38.9	26.2	Mumbai	—	33.9	26.4
Bhubaneswar	—	39.8	26.9	Mysuru	7	—	11.1
Chandigarh	—	38.2	25.3	New Delhi	0.4	38.7	24.9
Chennai	—	37.4	28.2	Patna	—	35.0	26.9
Coimbatore	—	36.2	26.0	Port Blair	—	33.4	26.8
Dehradun	0.6	35.5	22.5	Puducherry	—	36.0	29.2
Gangtok	1	21.9	14.4	Pune	59.8	39.2	23.9
Goa	—	34.6	25.4	Raipur	—	40.6	27.5
Guwahati	2	34.0	22.4	Ranchi	—	34.8	23.1
Hubballi	—	37.0	24.0	Shillong	56	21.3	13.0
Hyderabad	5	36.8	25.2	Shimla	7	23.0	12.8
Imphal	0.4	28.2	16.7	Srinagar	3	25.9	11.2
Jaipur	—	40.8	27.8	Thiruvananthapuram	—	35.0	27.0
Kochi	—	33.4	26.2	Tiruchi	—	35.1	28.0
Kohima	8	20.8	12.2	Vijayawada	32	38.1	25.8
Kolkata	—	35.2	26.6	Visakhapatnam	—	35.2	27.5

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO_2	NO_2	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	.10	..57	108	...105	...112	
Bengaluru	.11	..22	.35	44	56	
Chennai	.11	..16	.80	19	19	
Delhi	.14	103	.56	...315	...315	
Hyderabad	.15	148	.33	.....—	60	
Kolkata	...9	..30	.20	42	42	
Lucknow	...6	..57	.22	...257	...142	
Mumbai	.33	105	.72	37	76	
Pune	.27	..88	106	...104	90	
Visakhapatnam	.12	..53	.12	38	66	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Panchkula, Haryana recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 314 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Naharlagun, Arunachal Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 25

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO_2: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Chandrababu Naidu promises to protect 4% quota for Muslims

The Hindu Bureau
CHITTOOR

TDP national president N. Chandrababu Naidu on Saturday reiterated that he would protect the 4% reservation for the Muslim minorities, and restore all the welfare programmes meant for their welfare, which were scrapped by the YSRCP government.

Addressing the last 'Praja Galam election meeting at Murakambattu junction here, Mr. Naidu appealed to the Muslim minorities not to believe the falsehood of the YSRCP leaders against the reservation.

"You all should know that the YSRCP MPs supported the NRC and CAA in New Delhi, but have unleashed false campaign against the Bills in Andhra Pradesh," he said.

Terming Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy as "Rayalaseema Dhrohi," (betrayer of Rayalaseema), the TDP chief alleged that the YSRCP chief cheated the BCs in the name of social justice.

Mr. Naidu said the law and order situation was an utter failure in Andhra Pradesh. "A Chief Minister is not needed for pressing buttons. Even a child can press a button with more force. A Chief Minister is required to usher in development, construct roads, create infrastructure, and build educational institutions and hospitals," he said. The TDP chief spoke at length about the 'AP Land Titling Act, which he termed "draconian."

Explaining the "dangers of the Act," he tore to pieces the copies of pattadar passbooks that had the picture of Mr. Jagan and the Act. He reiterated that his second signature would be on scrapping the Act, while the first one would be on the Mega DSC.

Rahul visits ex-CM samadhi, tries to erase 'anti-YSR' scar

A.D. Rangarajan
KADAPA

For the first time in a decade, the Congress party has made an overt attempt to not only distance itself from the oft-made criticism of besmirching the image of former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy, but also to drive home the point to the voters that it had no role in getting his name included in the CBI chargesheet after his demise.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, during his visit to Kadapa on Saturday, made it a point to visit YSR Samadhi at Idupulapaya and pay respects at his grave.

Rahul Gandhi and Andhra Pradesh Congress chief Y.S. Sharmila in Kadapa on Saturday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Addressing a public meeting in Kadapa in support of APCC president Y.S. Sharmila, Mr. Gandhi insisted that the party was not behind getting YSR's name included in the chargesheet. "The Congress will do nothing to damage the reputation of its own Chief Minister. It was done by someone who wanted to derive some benefit by adding his name," he said.

From Page One

Summer drives up coconut price in city to ₹50 per piece

Furthermore, due to summer, the demand for tender coconuts has increased which has led to farmers choosing not to wait for mature coconuts. Even though this happens every year, due to this year's unusually hot summer, the prices have been increasing even more," said Jayanath R., deputy director, Coconut Development Board.

Kala, a coconut vendor at Jayanagar 4th block, lamented that the sales had come down due to the increased price. "The price jumped from ₹40 per piece to ₹50 this summer season and people have cut down on the number of coconuts they buy," she said. "While production has been affected, most farmers are supplying tender coconuts to the markets instead of sending mature coconuts as the demand is extensive for the former. In the upcoming days, it might get even more difficult to get mature coconuts. However, there is a price mismatch. The middlemen buy for ₹23 to ₹25 apiece from farmers and sell it for higher prices in markets," explained Raghavendra B, a coconut farmer from Shravana Belagola in Hassan district.

However, despite the increase, consumers like Padmini from Jayanagar find it difficult to forgo coconuts from their diet. "Even though the prices have increased, I still have to buy coconut as it is a staple in our meals," she remarked. "However, I purchase it in lesser quantity when the price goes up." Apart from cooking, coconuts are also used for religious rituals by many. "The price has drastically gone up to ₹45 while it should not be more than ₹30. Coconut is not only consumed but also used for religious purposes, and everyone should have access to it at a more reasonable rate," said Madhavi Latha, who was buying coconuts in Madiwala.

Divine tunes

Caparisoned elephants lined up for Thalappoli, a procession at the Sri Muneshwara Swamy Temple in Palakkad on Saturday. K.K. MUSTAFAH

Tipplers in Vizag stock up ahead of dry days due to election in A.P.

The Hindu Bureau
VISAKHAPATNAM

Tipplers lined up before many government retail outlets in Visakhapatnam on Saturday to buy liquor in large quantity as the shops will not be opened till the elections are over.

At many government retail outlets, they were told to buy only one or two liquor bottles per head clarifying that the move was meant to limit alcohol consumption during the election time.

Dissatisfied with the move, people thronged shops to buy as many bottles as they want for the next two days (Sunday and Monday). As a result, large queues of tipplers were seen till the shops were closed at 5 p.m. on Saturday. The manager of a retail outlet in Dwarakanagar said, "We have limited the sale of liquor to one or two bottles per person as per instructions." Prohibition and Excise Department officials said that all liquor shops, bars, depots, distilleries and breweries have remained closed from 5 p.m. on Saturday till the completion of elections on Monday as per the Model Code of Conduct.

Overall, the State recorded an average sale of one lakh cases of liquor and around 40 lakh cases of beer per day.

Political parties are believed to have kept huge stocks of liquor in all these days to satisfy voters and party workers.

T.N. issues advisory

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

In the wake of Kerala reporting cases of West Nile virus, the Directorate of Public Health (DPH) and Preventive Medicine has issued an advisory on the prevention of the mosquito-borne disease and the importance of prompt testing and treatment.

In a press release issued on Saturday, the directorate said that recently, cases of West Nile virus had been identified in Kozhikode, Malappuram, and Thrissur districts of Kerala. The West Nile virus is spread through the bite of an infected mosquito.

The directorate reiterated the need to identify mosquito-breeding sources and take up control measures.

'Give Sharmila a chance to serve you'

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

Y.S. Vijayamma, wife of the former Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy and mother of incumbent Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and APCC president Y.S. Sharmila, has appealed to the people of Kadapa district to cast their vote in favour of her daughter, who is contesting as Congress party candidate from Kadapa seat. "Just like you showered your affection and blessings on Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy, I request you to show similar love and support to Sharmila, who is contesting from the Kadapa seat, and give her a chance to serve you," she said.

Kerala colleges use reels, videos to attract students

Institutions like CMS College and St. Berchmans College are banking on these innovations in the next academic year's admission drive; social media plays important role in framing perception about colleges, says Principal of CMS College

Hiran Unnikrishnan
KOTTAYAM

Faced with a shrinking enrolment for the undergraduate programmes they offer, some colleges in Kerala, are now taking the battle to recruit students into the virtual world.

Institutions such as CMS College in Kottayam and St. Berchmans College in Changanassery, among others, are leveraging reels and short videos for promotional campaigns, recognising the importance of these innovations in the upcoming academic year's student recruitment drive.

CMS College depends on reels for promotional campaigns.

Various factors such as increased demand for nursing and allied jobs post COVID-19, scepticism about traditional courses, international migration, and competition from out-of-State institutions have created a challenging landscape for the colleges in the region.

According to Fr. Reji P. Kurien, Principal of St. Berchmans College, these promotional videos offer reassurance to prospective students on the institution's academic quality, academic ranking, and employment prospects.

Positive response

The positive response has prompted the institution to commission regular video releases, targeting different student communities across the State. "Colleges are focussing on platforms where their target audience spends most of their time," he says.

Confirming the trend, Varghese C. Joshua, Principal, CMS College Kottayam, says social media play a key role in framing the student's perception of an institution.

"It's a generation that uses smartphones to connect with academia, and it's not just students who are creating these influential video contents, but the academics too are doing this. Such videos are about building closer relationships with students, and the colleges are now getting a lot better at it," he says.

From Page One

Will Modi follow his rule, asks Kejriwal

Out on interim bail till June 1, Mr. Kejriwal said that he will travel across the country and beg people to save India from a "dictatorship". He said that the BJP thought that by getting the top four leaders of the AAP arrested, they would be able to destroy the party but that plan has backfired. "They have made a fake case against me and thought I would resign as Chief Minister but I did not fall for their conspiracy. Even Hemant Soren, who has been arrested, should not have resigned," he said.

Reacting to the statement, Mr. Shah said, "I would like to tell Arvind Kejriwal and company and the whole INDIA bloc that there is no need for you to feel happy that Mr. Modi is turning 75. It is not written anywhere in the BJP's constitution that you have to retire. Mr. Modi will complete the term and will continue to lead the country. There is no confusion in BJP on this."

Study shows impact of climate hazards

Speaking on the sidelines of the WomenLift Health Global Conference 2024 at Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania, in April earlier this year, Ms. Swaminathan said, "In our scoping study we realised that up to 70% of Indian districts are at very high risk of floods, droughts, and cyclones. Women and children's under-nutrition, teenage pregnancy and domestic violence indicators in these hotspots are also very stark."

Overall, 183 districts were vulnerable to hydro-meteorological disasters such as cyclones and floods, while 349 districts witnessed drought. The study was able to generate certain spatial hotspots where high exposure to hydro-met hazards such as floods, cyclones and droughts significantly co-exists with a higher prevalence of poor health variables such as underweight women and child marriage.

'Need immediate attention'

In northern areas of Bihar and Gujarat, the geospatial maps show hotspots where exposure to drought, flood, and cyclone co-exist with stunting and underweight children. In terms of women's nutritional indicators too, these States need immediate attention, the study says. The northern parts of both States are flood-prone areas battered by heavy rainfall.

The study also points out that the northern plains, including parts of Uttar Pradesh, have hotspots for stunting, while parts of north Maharashtra and south Madhya Pradesh are hotspots for underweight children.

"Also, it should be noted that southern India and parts of coastal belts in Odisha have high exposure scores to hydro-met hazards but perform better in terms of child stunting and underweight, highlighting the role of stronger health systems," the study points out.

Vulnerability to heatwaves

The document submitted to the Ministry states that the study's limitations include reliance on secondary data sources, with limited empirical insights into the health aspects of women affected by climate change.

The recommendation to the Ministry also states that there is a key gap in evidence, in order to understand differential factors behind children's vulnerability to heatwaves and develop a systematic method to measure children's exposure to heatwaves, and relatively less research attention has been paid to this area of inquiry, particularly in India.

"Excess deaths due to heat are not recognised and every State and city should make a heat action plan to tackle the effects of heatwaves. There should be accountability for who is responsible for co-ordination, who will finance, how will messages be disseminated. It is a multi-sectoral effort," Ms. Swaminathan said.

EC urged to conduct press conference on election day

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Media associations have written to the Chief Election Commissioner demanding that press conferences be held after each phase of voting and that the entire poll data, including "absolute number" of votes polled in each phase and percentage of voting, be released by next day.

In a joint letter, the Press Club of India, the Indian Women Press Corp, the Press Association, the Foreign Correspondent Club, and the Delhi Union of Journalists expressed dismay at the Election Commission (EC) not holding a single press conference even after the completion of three phases of voting. "Till 2019, holding a press conference after voting in each phase was the normal practice. India, being one of the largest democracies in the world..., the citizens have every right to know what has happened on the voting day," the letter said.

Expressing surprise that the EC had not been releasing the "absolute number of votes polled", the letter said this was not the case in the past elections. The developments had led to apprehension in the minds of people about the fairness of the election, it said.

Surprised EC ignored complaints raised by Opposition: Kharge

Congress stands for the strength and independence of the poll panel, says Mallikarjun Kharge, in a letter to the Election Commission

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Responding to the Election Commission's (EC) rebuttal, Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge on Saturday said in a letter to the EC that the Congress was on its side and it was for the officials of the EC to decide where they stood.

The EC on Friday issued a public rebuttal to a letter written by Mr. Kharge to his colleagues in the INDIA bloc on the alleged "discrepancies in the voting data" released by the election panel, calling it an "attempt to push a biased narrative under the guise of seeking clarifications".

Mr. Kharge said it was "surprising" that the EC chose to respond to a letter addressed to "alliance partners" and not to the commission while ignoring several other complaints given directly to it. He also stated that while he had "misgivings" about the language of the EC's letter, he would not press on with the issue.

"The letter on one hand says the EC respects citizen's rights to ask questions and on the other hand threatens citizens in the form of an advise to exercise caution," he said.

> The letter on one hand says the EC respects citizen's rights to ask questions and on the other hand threatens citizens in the form of an advise to exercise caution
>
> **MALLIKARJUN KHARGE**
> Congress president

'Puzzling' response

Mr. Kharge said he was happy that the EC understood that it had the mandate to conduct smooth, free, and fair elections under the Constitution, yet he found the "lack of urgency" in taking action against "blatantly communal and casteist statements" made by the the ruling party leaders "puzzling".

Equally surprising, even though factually correct, Mr. Kharge said, was the EC's comment that it was not "legally bound to publish any voter turnout data at aggregate level of a constituency or State".

"Many voters who are deeply interested in the election would also like to see the absolute number of votes polled to be put out in the public domain by the EC directly," Mr. Kharge noted.

Expressing disappointment that in the rebuttal, the EC failed to make any assurance that it would work to "safeguard democracy" and "protect" their own independent functioning, he said, "To make it more clear, the Congress party is on the side of the commission and stands for the strength and independence of the commission. The officials of the commission should now decide where they stand."

Rahul Gandhi accepts invitation to take part in debate with Modi

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Rahul Gandhi

Congress leader and Wayanad MP Rahul Gandhi has accepted an invitation by two prominent jurists and a senior editor to participate in a public debate.

Retired Supreme Court judge Justice Madan B. Lokur, former Delhi High Court Chief Justice Ajit P. Shah, and former Editor-in-Chief of *The Hindu* N. Ram had on May 9 invited Mr. Gandhi and Prime Minister Narendra Modi to a public debate that would be "on a non-partisan and non-commercial platform".

Mr. Gandhi wrote in the letter, a copy of which was released by his party on Saturday, that either he or Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge would attend the debate, and that he had discussed the matter with Mr. Kharge before responding to the invitation. "As the principal parties fighting the election, the public deserves to hear from their leaders directly," Mr. Gandhi's response reads. "Please do let us know if and when the Prime Minister agrees to participate, following which we can discuss the details and format of the debate."

The invitation left the option open to both leaders to nominate a representative for the debate, "only if either of [them] is unable to" attend.

Healthy democracy

The invitation cited "important questions to the core of our constitutional democracy", and raised concerns that "we have heard only allegations and challenges from either side, and not heard any meaningful responses".

A debate would be healthy for Indian democracy, the invitation stated.

Mr. Modi and the spokespersons for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) did not immediately comment on Saturday evening on Mr. Gandhi's willingness to participate in the debate.

Speaking at an event in Lucknow on Friday, Mr. Gandhi had indicated his "100%" readiness to take part in a debate with Mr. Modi but added that "I know the Prime Minister will not debate with me".

Punjabi poet Surjit Patar passes away at 79 in Ludhiana

The Hindu Bureau
CHANDIGARH

Surjit Patar

Noted Punjabi poet and Padma Shri recipient Surjit Patar passed away at his residence in Ludhiana on Saturday. He was 79.

Mr. Patar died in his sleep, his family members said. He is survived by his wife and two sons.

Mr. Patar's poetic works include *Hawa Vich Likhe Harf*, *Hanere Vich Sulagdi Varanmala*, *Patjhar Di Pazeb*, *Lafzaan Di Dargah*, and *Surzameen*.

Mr. Patar hailed from Patar Kalan village in Jalandhar. He retired as a professor of Punjabi from Punjab Agricultural University. He also served as the president of the Punjab Arts Council.

Several political leaders, including Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, expressed grief over the demise of Mr. Patar.

Former Union Law Minister Ashwani Kumar said, "The passing away of Dr. Surjit Patar, the eminent and acclaimed Punjabi poet, has left a deep void in the world of Punjabi literature. As a 'philosopher of the heart', Dr. Patar kept alive in his writings our deepest yearnings, ensuring that private and social realities were not kept outside the language of heart. It can be said of him that the poet and poetry were revealed in each other."
(With PTI inputs)

Campaign ends for fourth phase of Lok Sabha polls

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann during a roadshow in New Delhi on Saturday. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Campaigning ended for the fourth phase of the Lok Sabha election on 96 seats in 10 States and Union Territories on Saturday.

During the campaign, Prime Minister Narendra Modi continued his attacks against the Opposition, raising a range of issues, including alleged corruption, nepotism, and minority appeasement, while the Opposition's campaign, led by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and others, was based on unemployment, threats to reservation, and economic distress.

Elections to all the seats in the Andhra Pradesh Assembly, and 28 seats in the Odisha Assembly, will also take place on Monday.

Among the prominent candidates in the fray are Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav (Kannauj), Union Ministers Giriraj Singh (Begusarai) and Nityanand Rai (Ujiarpur), Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury (Baharampurl), BJP's Pankaja Munde (Beed), All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) president Asaduddin Owaisi (Hyderabad) and Andhra Pradesh Congress president Y.S. Sharmila (Kadapa).

Union Minister Ajay Kumar Mishra Teni, whose son is an accused in the 2021 Lakhimpur Kheri violence case, is eyeing a hattrick from Kheri, while Trinamool Congress's Mahua Moitra is seeking re-election from Krishnanagar.

Polling will be held on Monday in 17 Lok Sabha seats in Telangana, 25 in Andhra Pradesh, 13 in Uttar Pradesh, five in Bihar, four in Jharkhand, eight in Madhya Pradesh, 11 in Maharashtra, four in Odisha, eight in West Bengal and one in Jammu and Kashmir.
(With PTI inputs)

ED arrests 3 in land scam case linked to Hemant Soren

The Hindu Bureau
PATNA

The Enforcement Directorate has arrested three more people in an alleged land scam involving former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, who is already in jail in a money laundering case. So far, 25 people have been arrested as part of the investigation.

"They have been arrested for their role in forgery, tampering and fabrication of land records by changing the nature of lands which are designated as non-saleable under Chota Nagpur Tenancy Act (CNT Act), a legislation with objective to protect the land rights of tribal and marginalized communities," an ED official in Ranchi said.

The ED has initiated investigation in five cases of land scam with similar modus operandi on the basis of multiple FIRs.

J&K Police release six sketches of guard's killers

The Hindu Bureau
JAMMU

The J&K police on Saturday released six sketches of suspects involved in the killing of a Village Defence Guard (VDG) on April 28 in Udhampur. One local from Kathua has been arrested for "providing logistic support" to non-local terrorists.

"On the basis of several inputs, we have prepared five to six sketches of the suspects. Two sketches look identical. There is a possibility that they are two brothers. A reward of up to ₹10 lakh will be provided to those who help in neutralising them," the police said.

Encroachments, land diversions for 'non-forestry purposes' threaten Delhi Ridge, the capital's lungs

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Forest Department has 6,626 hectares of forest land, of which 5% or 308.55 hectares have been encroached. FILE PHOTO

Over 308 hectares of the ecologically sensitive Delhi Ridge area have been encroached and another 183 hectares "diverted" for "non-forestry purposes", a Central Empowered Committee (CEC) report informed the Supreme Court.

The Delhi Ridge is the tail end of the ancient Aravalli Hills, which is around 1,500 million years old and stretches through Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan and Gujarat.

The Forest Department has 6,626 hectares of forest land. Five percent, that is, 308.55 hectares, have been encroached.

"These are official figures and actual encroachment can be much more and can be found out only after the entire boundary of Delhi Ridge is secured by geo-tagged pillars. The speed of removal of encroachments is also quite slow with only 91 hectares of encroachment removed in the last five years," the report noted.

Similarly, diversion of ridge land for non-forestry purposes has increased gradually, the CEC highlighted. "In the last five years it was 183.8841 hectares as compared to 117.9718 hectares in the earlier five-year period. Total figure from 2015 onwards stands at 301.8559 hectares, which is around four percent of the total ridge area," the report said.

The CEC said the management of the ridge land, called the green lungs of the national capital, did not "seem to be up to the mark with five percent [of forest land] under encroachment, rate of diversion on the rise and four percent diverted".

The report came up before a Supreme Court Bench headed by Justice B.R. Gavai. The CEC told the court it would file a detailed report on the challenges faced by the Delhi Ridge, which include rapid urbanisation, manifold increase in the population of Delhi and rapacious exploitation of resources. It said these factors have resulted in slow erosion of a natural bounty. *Amicus curiae*, advocate K. Parameshwar, is assisting the top court in the case.

"The Delhi Ridge, a vital ecological and geographical feature, stands at a critical juncture marred by a myriad of challenges. Despite its significant ecological value, the Ridge faces various issues including encroachments and a tangled web of ownership disputes," the CEC said.

The report said the different orders passed by multi-fold committees, authorities and courts have led to not only no progress being made to secure the ridge but have also diluted the seriousness of the issue over the years.

Author Ruskin Bond awarded Sahitya Akademi Fellowship

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Ruskin Bond

Eminent author Ruskin Bond has been awarded the Sahitya Akademi Fellowship, the highest honour given by the literary organisation.

Due to his ill health, the honour was given to him by Sahitya Akademi president Madhav Kaushik and Sahitya Akademi secretary K. Sreenivasarao at his Mussoorie home, an official release said. Mr. Bond's son was also present on the occasion.

Born on May 19, 1934 in Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh, Mr. Bond has been active in the world of writing for more than 50 years and has written in various genres of literature.

His notable works include *Vagrants in the Valley*, *Once Upon a Monsoon Time*, *Angry River*, *Strangers in the Night*, *All Roads Lead to Ganga*, *Tales of Fosterganj*, *Leopard on the Mountain* and *Too Much Trouble*.

ELECTIONS 2024

65.68% turnout recorded in third phase: EC

The updated voter turnout figures for the third phase of polling in the Lok Sabha election stood at 65.68%, the Election Commission (EC) said on Saturday.

The poll panel had given a similar figure on May 8, a day after the third phase of voting took place.

In a statement on Saturday, the EC said 66.89% of men, 64.4% of women and 25.2% of the registered transgender voters turned up at polling stations. In the third phase, 17.24 crore citizens, including 8.85 crore men and 8.39 crore women, were eligible to vote.

Voting for the third phase was held on May 7 in 93 constituencies spread over 11 States and Union Territories. In phase three of the 2019 parliamentary polls, the voter turnout was 68.4%. PTI

Polling officials prepare to seal an EVM at the end of voting in Hathras on May 7. PTI

BJP belittles Rahul's pitch for debate with PM

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Saturday made light of Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's readiness for a debate with Prime Minister Narendra Modi as it questioned his knowledge of issues and his standing, noting that he was neither the president of his party nor the Leader of the Opposition.

Addressing a press conference, BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi also took a swipe at Mr. Gandhi over his claim that the Opposition INDIA bloc would win the Lok Sabha polls, saying someone who could not file his nomination from Amethi was speaking about forming government at the Centre.

Mr. Trivedi asked in what capacity was Mr. Gandhi looking to debate with Mr. Modi as he was merely an MP of his party. PTI

"You saw it during the 10 years of UPA rule led by the Congress how terror attacks were tolerated... proper response was not given

NIRMALA SITHARAMAN
Union Finance Minister

69.93% turnout in re-election at booth in Gujarat

A voter turnout of 69.93% was recorded in the repolling held at the Parthampura booth under Dahod Lok Sabha constituency in Gujarat on Saturday after the Election Commission declared the May 7 voting as null and void as a man had live-streamed the process from this booth. PTI

"None of the BJP's old and new theatrics, statements and guarantees will be of any use in the election this time

MAYAWATI
Bahujan Samaj Party chief

Kirti Azad and, right, Yusuf Pathan. PTI

Two World Cup-winning cricketers test Bengal poll pitch

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

As the Lok Sabha election in West Bengal turns to its slog overs, two World Cup-winning cricketers will be testing the political pitch of the State.

Kirti Azad, 65, who was part of the 1983 World Cup winning squad, is contesting from Bardhaman-Durgapur, while Yusuf Pathan, 41, a member of the Indian cricket team that won the World Cup in 2011, is testing the political waters from Baharampur seat in Murshidabad.

Both of them are contesting the polls on Trinamool Congress ticket and are in contest against political heavyweights. Mr. Azad is up against former West Bengal Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Dilip Ghosh, while Mr. Pathan is up against five time Congress MP Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury.

Though their candidatures have been the subject of much debate since the Trinamool decided to field candidates from outside the State – something which the party has accused the BJP of doing – the two cricketers have added much colour to the election campaign this season.

In the industrial township of Bardhaman-Durgapur, marked by steel plants, Mr. Azad – who has been both an MP and an MLA from the BJP before turning to the Congress and now the Trinamool – has been raising the issue of attempts being made to evict locals from the Durgapur Steel Plant area.

"I will die but not let you be evicted from your land. If Dilip Ghosh has the courage, he should come and say that people will not be evicted from the land," Mr. Azad says during his campaign.

The former right-hand batsman and off spin bowler, in his speeches in Hindi, raises questions on the performance of S.S. Ahluwalia, the BJP MP from the constituency. "Were missing posters not put for the BJP MP here? Was he there when the DSP people came for eviction?" he says.

Praise for schemes

At Baharampur, Yusuf Pathan who is making a political debut, speaks about the schemes of the Mamata Banerjee government. Contesting from a Muslim-dominated constituency, Mr. Pathan praises the schemes of the Trinamool government, particularly the honorariums to imams and muezzins.

"I remember my father [who served as imam] had a salary of ₹3,000 and he took care of us. The initiative by Mamata Banerjee giving honorarium to imams and muezzins is very praiseworthy," he says. During his campaign, the former pinch hitter emphasises the importance of madrasas in shaping the life of the youth.

"I have been sent here by Mamata Banerjee and Abhishek Banerjee. I hope that you all will be with me in *Khela Hobe* [Game will be played–a slogan of the Trinamool]," Mr. Pathan says, often referring to sports during his campaign.

Both cricketers are occasionally seen playing cricket with youngsters during their campaign. Connection with the youth on the issue of sports has been a crucial part of their election campaign.

Both Baharampur and Bardhaman-Durgapur go to the polls on May 13, in the fourth phase of polling.

'Congress should explain why Rahul is not fighting from Amethi; it is their cowardice'

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister says the BJP's strength lies in its collective leadership and that Congress leaders have no ideology; he says it is only in his party that a person who is not from a majority caste group or without family connections in politics can still rise to a top position

INTERVIEW

Mohan Yadav

Mehul Malpani
UJJAIN

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, who is leading the BJP campaign in the State in the first election since becoming the CM, says that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's decision to not contest from Amethi shows "his cowardice".

Mr. Yadav, in an apparent attack on the Samajwadi Party, asks how a party, which has had Chief Ministers, Ministers, MLAs and MPs from one family, can speak about an entire community. The Chief Minister says that when he visits neighbouring Uttar Pradesh, he takes forward the message that someone who does not hail from the majority caste group in a State can also reach a top post. Edited excerpts:

Is this the first big test for Mohan Yadav?

See, we have collective leadership in our party. The

A.M. FARUQUI

success of a film does not only depend on the hero-heroine but also upon the director, musician and others. How the film is, the timing of its release, all these factors matter. I might be seen on the driving seat but our party, our organisation and ideology work so deeply that I find my job easier.

You are also going to other States, especially Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Can we say that the BJP has found its poster boy for the Yadav community?

If you have listened to Modi*ji*'s speeches, he has said there are only four castes [the poor, the youth, women and farmers]. So, it is wrong to say that I am going across the country only because I am a Yadav. But yes, I come from a farmer's family and poor family, so our journey began from the very bottom. And if I have become the CM of a State with a population of 8.5 crore, it is a matter of pride that my party has made me the CM without asking about the caste. Even in my Assembly constituency (Ujjain-Dakshin), my caste group is not in the majority. So, we have made a statement that a person not from the majority community and someone who does not have an MP, Minister or Chief Minister in their family can also become an MLA. Modi*ji* himself is an example of this as nobody from his family held any posts like Prime Minister or Chief Minister. And there are many such examples.

But, Yadavs in Uttar Pradesh have long been associated with the Samajwadi Party. What are you offering them when you go there?

If Chief Ministers, Ministers, MLAs and MPs come from one family, then how can they talk about the community? I am an example in front of them. I am not criticising anybody but I will share the good things about the BJP. Modi*ji* himself has said that our BJP gives a chance to everyone, like how 'Mohan Yadav*ji* is working in Madhya Pradesh'. So, should this example be shared or not? This is a moment that makes the democracy proud.

You also visited Amethi and attended Smriti Irani's roadshow. Rahul Gandhi, however, has chosen to contest Rae Bareli and no Gandhi family member will contest Amethi. Comments?

The Congress should explain why he (Rahul Gandhi) is not fighting (from Amethi). I only think that it is their cowardice. This can also be seen from the perspective that he has entered politics as part of an inheritance. The lineage of emperors is gone but what is the message that this family wants to give? His uncle (Sanjay Gandhi) contested Amethi, his father became the PM after contesting the seat. So, first he destroyed his father's seat and now he is destroying his mother's (Sonia Gandhi) seat.

You have also talked about the recent statements by Mani Shankar Aiyar and Sam Pitroda.

These are really unfortunate statements. We are saying that they (Congress leaders) are zero in terms of ideology. Their roots are not in this country. They are seen in India but their roots are in Pakistan and America. Now the elections are being fought in India but they are talking about American laws. What can be more unfortunate than getting a certificate of being a good politician from Pakistan, an enemy nation that has harmed the people of India at every step? What should I comment on such a person?

People of India know that the Congress is slowly finishing.

In Madhya Pradesh, one major issue is that the youth are angry over the state of government job recruitments, exam cancellations and paper leaks. They are also angry about how the *patwari* (revenue department staff) exam issue was dealt with.

We initiated an inquiry by a retired judge of the High Court as soon as questions were raised on the *patwari* recruitment process. When he proved it (the process) fair, the more than 9,000 selected candidates demanded that they be given jobs. So, we gave all appointments in one day. Is it wrong to fill the vacancies? There is no anger. We are giving jobs. Apart from this, we are continuously filling vacancies. The youth is happy about it. I have personally discussed the issues with many of them.

Madhya Pradesh's tribal region goes to the polls but Indore steals the limelight in fourth phase

Mehul Malpani
INDORE

The BJP and the Congress are fighting essentially a two-horse race in the eight remaining seats of Madhya Pradesh which go to the polls in the fourth phase of the Lok Sabha election on Monday.

The eight seats are Dewas (SC), Ujjain (SC), Ratlam (ST), Khargone (ST), Dhar (ST), Indore, Mandsaur, and Khandwa.

Twenty-one of the total 29 seats have already completed voting in the first three phases.

All the eight seats that fall under the Malwa-Nimar region are currently being held by the BJP.

The Indore constituency throws up a unique proposition, with the Congress urging the electorate to opt for the "None of the Above" (NOTA) option after its official candidate withdrew his nomination

Keeping up his relentless push for winning 400 seats in the election, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had remarked in Dhar that the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) needed to emerge victorious to stop the Congress from "bringing back Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir" and putting a "Babri lock" on Ram temple in Ayodhya.

Counterattack mode: Workers of the Congress and other INDIA parties campaigning for NOTA in Indore on Saturday. A.M.FARUQUI

Apart from Mr. Modi's rallies in Dhar and Khargone, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had also campaigned in the State, holding rallies in Ratlam and Khargone.

Both leaders, in their speeches, have tried to draw the support of the tribal people as three seats are reserved for the community that also has a sizeable population in others.

In his rallies, Mr. Gandhi also announced that the Congress, if voted to power, will increase the wages under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) to ₹400 per day.

Apart from the issues of Ram temple and Article 370, Mr. Modi targeted the Congress, accusing it of wanting to give reservation on religious lines.

Call for NOTA

The Congress has uniquely focused its campaign in the Indore Lok Sabha segment for NOTA as the party's official candidate Akshay Kanti Bam withdrew his nomination. The party workers have been running an extensive campaign asking people to vote for NOTA and "teach the BJP a lesson". The party, which accused the BJP of "hijacking its candidate and murdering democracy", has now been organising various events across the constituency, including marches and door-to-door campaigns.

The BJP, meanwhile, has dubbed the Congress's campaign as "negative politics" and has focused on increasing the vote percentage. It has retained sitting MP Shankar Lalwani from the seat.

Tribal hotspot

The Congress, which had secured a handsome mandate from the Malwa-Nimar region in the 2018 Assembly polls, lost its ground in the region in the 2019 Lok Sabha and 2023 Assembly elections.

The party, however, has been attempting to reach out to the tribal community of the region, mainly with the claims that if the BJP returns to power, it will "throw away the Constitution". Mr. Gandhi, in Khargone, had also said: "If the Constitution gets finished, all the rights you have got will disappear. Your *jal, zameen aur jungle* (water, land and forest), and reservation and the public sector will all disappear."

One of the closest contests is expected in Ratlam where former Union Minister and five-term Congress MP Kanjilal Bhuria takes on BJP candidate and district council president Anita Nagar Singh Chouhan, who is the wife of State Minister Nagar Singh Chouhan. The BJP here denied ticket to its sitting MP, Guman Singh Damor.

The seat, which has over 65% tribal voters, is seeing a tussle between the two sub-groups of the community – Bhil and Bhilala.

While Mr. Bhuria hails from the Bhil community that has about 10 lakh voters, Ms. Chouhan is from the Bhilala group with a voting population of over 2.5 lakh.

Chief Minister Mohan Yadav's home constituency Ujjain will also be voting in the fourth phase. Mr. Yadav has put his might to ensure the party's victory here. The BJP has retained its sitting MP Anil Firojiya in the seat.

Dhar constituency is also expected to witness an interesting contest following the Archaeological Survey of India's survey of the Bhojshala-Kamal Maula complex.

J&K political parties allege harassment of supporters

Peerzada Ashiq
SRINAGAR

Just two days ahead of the Srinagar Lok Sabha election, the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the National Conference (NC) on Saturday accused the Jammu and Kashmir administration of "bias" and "unjust crackdown on party activists".

Waheed-ur-Rehman Parra, the PDP candidate from the Srinagar seat, sought the intervention of the Prime Minister's Office and the Union Home Ministry against officials.

According to the PDP, around 50 supporters of the party, including its polling agents, have been arrested.

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti accused the administration of imposing Section 144 "in an attempt to target our workers".

NC president Farooq Abdullah also alleged that the police were "instilling fear among voters".

"The L-G must stop the harassment of people. The police are calling elders and youth and then telling them they are with Hurriyat and others," he said.

INBRIEF

Priyanka Gandhi accuses BJP of disrespecting tribal culture

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Saturday criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi's poll speeches as mere 'hollow talk' and urged him to learn his lessons from the life of her grandmother and former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. Addressing a poll rally, she accused the BJP of disregarding the culture and traditions of tribals. She also questioned Mr. Modi's sincerity towards issues such as women's safety and empowerment. "Why didn't he raise a finger when women wrestlers were on the streets protesting against the harassment, but the BJP gave the ticket to the son of the accused person," she said referring to Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh.

Naxalism will revive if INDIA bloc comes to power: U.P. CM

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday said that if the INDIA bloc comes to power at the Centre, the phase of Naxalism and terrorism will be revived in India. Mr. Adityanath alleged that the Congress is spreading rumours of constitutional amendments to scare people as he accused the grand old party of trampling the freedom of expression by amending the Indian Constitution. "They (Opposition parties) are more concerned about their own interests. Instead of addressing the issues of terrorism and Naxalism, they were withdrawing cases against terrorists. The phase of Naxalism and terrorism will be revived if they get elected," he said.

Centre misusing power to harass Opposition: Kalpana

Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) leader Kalpana Soren on Saturday accused the BJP-led Union government of misusing power to harass Opposition parties in the country. Ms. Kalpana, the wife of jailed former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren, said he was sent behind bars as he became a "victim of politics". She also hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, accusing him of "misguiding the country for the last 10 years". "Prime Minister has been exposed and needs to be ousted from power," Ms. Kalpana asserted, speaking at an election rally in support of coalition partner RJD's candidate Mamta Bhuiyan in Palamu Lok Sabha constituency. PTI

This poll is to save democracy and Constitution: Akhilesh

Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday reiterated that the 2024 Parliamentary election is to save India's democracy and Constitution. He said if the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) came back to power, it would change the Constitution and bring laws which would take away all the rights of marginalised communities like the Scheduled Caste (SC) and backwards. "I have come to make a request for the SP and myself. The BJP has increased inflation, unemployment and looted the farmers. On one side are those who are destroyers of the Constitution, who want to destroy it, and on the other side are we who want to save the Constitution," he said.

SUDOKU

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Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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8	7	1	2	9	4	3	6	5
9	4	3	5	8	6	7	1	2
4	6	7	3	2	1	5	8	9
3	1	5	8	4	9	2	7	6
2	9	8	7	6	5	1	4	3

Shadow of Maratha quota agitation, Pawar vs Pawar battle loom large

Eleven constituencies of Maharashtra, including high-profile seats of Beed and Pune, go to the polls in the fourth phase; quota activist Manoj Jarange-Patil's protests help galvanise the push for Maratha reservation, resulting in a sharp Maratha versus OBC division in the Marathwada region

Shoumojit Banerjee
PUNE

The spectre of the Maratha quota agitation hovers over several electoral battles as 11 key seats in Maharashtra goes to polls in phase four of the general election on May 13.

The seats that are located in the State's arid, economically backward Marathwada region, the prosperous western part and north Maharashtra, will also feel the effect of the splits in the Shiv Sena (June 2022) and the Nationalist Congress Party (July 2023) as the Pawar family tussle between Sharad Pawar and his nephew Ajit Pawar plays out by proxy in these seats.

However, the shadow of the Maratha quota agitation looms large over the constituencies of Beed, Jalna and Sambhajinagar (formerly Aurangabad) where the contests are expected to go down to the wire.

Past results

The table lists the 2019 election winners, runners-up, and their vote shares in the 11 constituencies going to the polls in the fourth phase of the Lok Sabha election in Maharashtra

Constituency	Party (winner)	Vote share	Party (2nd)	Vote share
Ahmadnagar	BJP	58.54	NCP	35.15
Aurangabad	AIMIM	32.47	Shiv Sena	32.09
Beed	BJP	50.15	NCP	37.7
Jalgaon	BJP	65.6	NCP	27.77
Jalna	BJP	57.78	Cong.	30.23
Maval	Shiv Sena	52.65	NCP	36.87
Nandurbar	BJP	49.86	Cong.	42.4
Pune	BJP	61.13	Cong.	29.77
Raver	BJP	59.96	Cong.	29.23
Shirdi	Shiv Sena	47.29	Cong.	35.62
Shirur	NCP	49.17	Shiv Sena	44.65

Election fervour: BJP supporters during a public meeting of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Nandurbar, Maharashtra. PTI

Quota activism

Like a twisted Shakespearean play, the tempest of the Maratha agitation, which aggravated caste tensions in Marathwada during much of last year, has found its 'Caliban' in the form of quota activist Manoj Jarange-Patil. Mr. Jarange-Patil's agitation has resulted in a sharp Maratha versus Other Backward Classes (OBC) division in the Marathwada region.

According to observers, the activist's pull among the Maratha community is set to determine the fates of both ruling Mahayuti and opposition Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) candidates in these three seats.

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has fielded former State Minister Pankaja Munde in Beed, arguably the most intensely contested seat in this phase. She is pitted against the MVA's Bajrang Sonawane of the Sharad Pawar-led NCP (SP). In a masterful move, the 83-year-old Sharad Pawar wooed Mr. Sonawane from Ajit Pawar's NCP faction over to his side.

While clan rivalries and family splits marked the third phase of polling, particularly Baramati, a paradox in the Beed Lok Sabha constituency is that estranged cousins have come together in the form of Ms. Munde and Dhananjay Munde, who is with the ruling Ajit Pawar-led NCP faction.

Like the Pawars in Baramati, the prestige of the influential OBC Munde clan is at stake in Beed.

For Ms. Pankaja Munde, who has been given a ticket in lieu of her sister Pritam Munde – the sitting MP of Beed – it is a trial by fire as the election will determine her political future.

The outcome will also determine whether Ms. Munde is the true legatee of her father, the late BJP stalwart Gopinath Munde, who, along with Pramod Mahajan, was instrumental in leading the saffron expansion in Maharashtra by welding together the OBCs as a cohesive BJP vote-bank.

Ms. Munde has had a stormy relationship with Deputy Chief Minister and BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis while her relations with the party top brass in Delhi have been notably frigid owing to impolitic statements made by her.

Finally given a ticket as Beed's candidate, Ms. Munde faces an uphill task owing to the heightened social tensions in the form of the Maratha versus OBC division among voters.

The mortal combat between Uddhav Thackeray's Shiv Sena (UBT) and Chief Minister Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena faction is playing out most prominently in the neighbouring Sambhajinagar seat, which is seeing a three-cornered contest with the incumbent MP, Imtiaz Jaleel of the Asaduddin Owaisi-led AIMIM ranged against the Shiv Sena (Shinde faction) candidate Sandipan Bhumre and former Aurangabad MP and Sena (UBT) candidate Chandrakant Khaire.

Mr. Jaleel, who had the support of Prakash Ambedkar's Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) in the 2019 general election, will now lack the Ambedkarite votes. He will also face a division in his core Muslim vote-bank given that a section of minority voters have moved towards Uddhav Thackeray, which is expected to benefit Mr. Khaire.

However, owing to the dizzying political alignments in the State, Mr. Khaire will now be bereft of the BJP's Hindu votes. Mr. Bhumre, on his part, faces the wrath of the Shiv Sena cadre which has not taken kindly to Mr. Shinde's revolt against Mr. Thackeray.

In western Maharashtra, the Pune seat is set for a fascinating contest: the BJP (Mahayuti) has fielded former city Mayor Murlidhar Mohol against the Congress' Ravindra Dhangekar, an MLA who was given the parliamentary ticket after his resounding win in the Kasba by-election last year.

The Pune seat, long a bastion of the Congress since 1951, has slipped out of the party's hands with the drift into political oblivion of Congressman Suresh Kalmadi. The BJP has reigned supreme here since the 2014 general election, consolidating its hold over Pune with a clean sweep in subsequent Assembly and civic body elections.

Besides Pune, two other seats in Pune district – Shirur and Maval – promise to be humdingers: In Shirur, Sharad Pawar and his nephew Ajit are locked in a bitter war by proxy as Pawar senior's candidate, NCP (SP) leader Dr. Amol Kolhe is pitted against the former MP of Shirur, businessman Shivajirao-Adhalrao Patil, who is Ajit Pawar and the Mahayuti's candidate.

In 2019, Dr. Kolhehad emerged as a 'giant killer' in Shirur by trouncing Mr. Adhalrao-Patil, who was then with the undivided Shiv Sena.

Congress is trying to terrify its own country, harm people's spirit: PM

Satyasundar Barik
BHUBANESWAR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday slammed the grand old party and accused the mindset of the Congress tries to terrify its own country.

"The Atal Bihari Vajpayee government had conducted a nuclear test in Pokhran. I remember when nuclear test was carried out, the Indian community settled across the globe felt proud and for the first time, people started to look at India with respect," Mr. Modi remarked while addressing a public meeting in Kandhamal district.

"On the other hand, the mindset of Congress tries to terrify its own country. Congress cautions that Pakistan has atom bomb. These scared people hurt the country's spirit. It has always been nature of Congress," Mr. Modi asserted.

Decision time: Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrives for a public meeting in Bargarh on Saturday. BJP

Attacking the Congress, Mr. Modi said, "It was this weakness of Congress for which the people of Kashmir suffered from terrorism for 60 years. India should never forget that instead of teaching terrorists a lesson, these people [Congress] were holding meetings with terror organisations."

Mr. Modi, "After the 26/11 Mumbai attack, they [Congress] could not muster the courage to take action against patrons of the terrorists. Congress and the INDIA bloc thought if action is taken against terrorist organisations, their vote-bank would get angry."

Attack on Patnaik

Throwing his weight behind the BJP's push for change in regime in Odisha, Mr. Modi also launched a frontal attack daring Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik to name districts and their headquarters towns without reading out from the paper.

"Can the Chief Minister understand your distress who cannot even name districts without paper? Can you trust him for the children's future?" he asked. He raked up this issue as State BJP leaders were critical of the Odisha CM's 'struggle' to deliver extempore speeches.

Modi will not be the Prime Minister this time, says Kharge

Amarnath Tewary
PATNA

A day ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's roadshow in Patna, Opposition *Mahagathbandhan* leaders on Saturday claimed that after three phases of the Lok Sabha elections involving 285 seats, it had become clear it would be "very difficult for Modi to form government" and that "Modi will not be the Prime Minister" this time. Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge also alleged that "the Modi government is a government of speaking lies".

Mallikarjun Kharge

"There is huge resentment among the people against the BJP and this NDA government at the Centre. Unemployment and rising inflation are the pressing issues for the people, which have become an unbearable load on them," Mr. Kharge said.

"I have not seen a Prime Minister creating so much division in society. He [Mr. Modi] only loves the word 'M' – Muslim, mutton, *mangalsutra* and *machhali* (fish)," Mr. Kharge said in a reference to Mr. Modi's speaking of them in his poll meetings.

'Harassing people'

"He [Mr. Modi] does not answer people's queries. They [the BJP] harass farmers, women, labourers and youth of the country and now they are harassing them in this election," he added.

"The only thing they resort to is Hindu-Muslim [rhetoric] to continue their politics and divide people, but people this time have understood that this is not good for the country and they (the BJP) are doing all this only for votes," Mr. Kharge said.

"Yesterday, in Maharashtra, he [Mr. Modi] said Pawar *saheb* (Sharad Pawar) and Uddhav Thackeray should come to us (the BJP) to fulfil their needs. Can a Prime Minister say all this?" Mr. Kharge said.

"The BJP-led NDA government has waived debt worth 16 lakh crore rupees of rich people but not of poor people. Earlier, when the Manmohan Singh government was in power, it had waived ₹72,000 crore debt of farmers," Mr. Kharge said.

"RSS people, who work only for rich people, are being trained these days and brought in to join in this government on key posts at the level of Joint Secretary. This government runs on a daily wage and contract basis. To stop them and to defeat them, we are working hard, and nowhere it appears that Modi and his party are going to win," he said.

When asked if various cases lodged against members of the Opposition would be withdrawn if the Congress government came to power, Mr. Kharge said "We will work as per the law and Constitution."

At the press interaction, Mr. Kharge was also asked who would be made Prime Minister if the Opposition alliance came to power. "*Mahagathbandhan* will choose the leader together," he said.

On former Indian Overseas Congress chief Sam Pitroda's controversial remarks and subsequent resignation, Mr. Kharge said: "We have accepted his resignation. That's all."

My goal is to ensure representation for 90% of population, says Rahul

Sobhana K. Nair
NEW DELHI

With reservation occupying the centre stage in the 2024 general election, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi accelerated his campaign for caste census saying he has the clarity that he is not in pursuit of power. Instead, he is working to ensure representation for 90% of the Indian population. At the same time, he chided the Congress for making mistakes in the past, exhorting his party to transform its politics.

Mr. Gandhi was speaking in Lucknow on Friday at the Rashtriya Samvidhan Sammelan organised by the Samruddha Bharat Foundation.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav waves to supporters in Kannauj on Friday. ANI

The Constitution, Mr. Gandhi said, has been a success but not an overarching one. It has failed to fulfil the expectations of its founding members since its benefits are not extended uniformly to all groups.

"95% of the Indian population that falls under the categories of backward communities, Dalits, Tribals, minorities and economically weaker sections among the forward castes still do not have a corresponding share of representation in the media, judiciary, bureaucracy or the corporate world. In this backdrop, the caste census only seeks to establish "*Hindustan ki sachai*" (India's truth). The BJP leaders are saying they will end reservation but the Congress will not allow it, asserted Mr. Gandhi. "Reservation is the voice of 90% of India," he said.

He branded Prime Minister Narendra Modi as a "21st century monarch" who works according to his whim without paying heed to Parliament, his Cabinet or the Constitution. He reiterated that Mr. Modi will not return as Prime Minister.

"Political leaders stumble through their lives chasing power, spending every minute how to gain it, but without attaining clarity of political thought. I have got the clarity that I have to work to ensure representation for the 90% of our population. And this battle has to be fought with love, respect and strength".

INBRIEF

TVS Srichakra Q4 standalone net rises 17% to ₹26 crore

Tyre manufacturer TVS Srichakra Ltd.'s standalone net profit for the quarter ended March rose 17% YoY to ₹26 crore on higher sales volume. Revenue from operations increased to ₹703 crore from ₹647 crore. Cost of materials consumed grew by ₹37 crore to ₹386 crore. The result included exceptional items of ₹7.58 crore, the tyre major said in a regulatory filing.
The company's board declared a dividend of ₹47.34 per share.

JSW crude steel output stays almost flat at 21.21 lakh tonnes

JSW Steel's consolidated crude steel production in April remained almost flat at 21.21 lakh tonnes (LT). Consolidated output was 21.13 LT in April 2023, the company said in a filing on Saturday. In India, the company produced 20.55 LT crude steel against 20.33 LT a year earlier. The production of JSW Steel USA - Ohio fell to 0.66 LT in April from 0.80 LT in the year-earlier period. JSW Steel is the flagship business of the 23-billion JSW Group. PTI

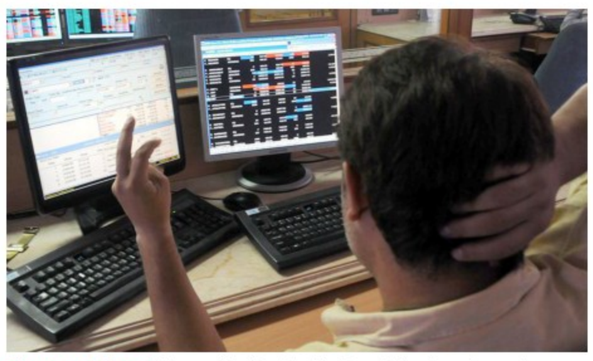
Zydus gets U.S. FDA nod to market arthritis drug in U.S.

Zydus Lifesciences on Saturday said it had received approval from the U.S. health regulator to market a generic medication for arthritis and other conditions in the American market. The company has received final approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to market Dexamethasone tablets (Img), the drug maker said in a statement. Dexamethasone is used to treat conditions like arthritis, blood/hormone disorders and eye problems. PTI

FPIs dump Indian equities in May amid election uncertainty

Equity outflows of FPIs touch ₹17,083 crore so far in May; Market volatility rises with the fear gauge India VIX touching 18.4, its highest level this year

K.R. Srivats
NEW DELHI



Pivot to China: FPIs opt for 'Sell India, Buy China' trade on cheaper valuations in Chinese, Hong Kong markets, says analysts. FILE PHOTO

Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs) have turned aggressive sellers in Indian equities in May 2024, largely spooked by the uncertainty over the outcome of general elections. They now favour the 'Sell India, Buy China' trade due to cheaper valuations in Chinese and Hong Kong markets, said market analysts.

FPIs have net sold Indian equities to the tune of ₹17,083 crore so far in the seven trading sessions in May 2024, taking their overall outflows in equities from India this calendar year to ₹14,861 crore, data with depositories showed.

V.K. Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said FIIs' sales in the cash market in May was much higher at ₹24,975 crore.

VIX at peak

He said that the situation could change dramatically once clarity emerged on the election outcome. "If the election results turn out to be favourable from the market perspective, aggressive buying by DIIs, retail and HNIs can push the market sharply up," Mr. Vijayakumar noted. The volatility index (VIX) – also known as a fear gauge – touched 18.4 (the highest in 2024) this past week as equity benchmarks saw sharp corrections in both benchmark indices and broader markets. So far in May, Nifty50 has slid 2.5%, falling about 500 points.

Tarun Singh, MD of Highbrow Securities, said market volatility, reflected by the India VIX, underscores the selling pressure, primarily affecting overvalued large-cap stocks.

"The temperament of FPIs, largely speculative and focused on ephemeral gains, overlooks the broader, long-term growth narratives of economies like India or Hong Kong. Despite current valuations rendering India's market relatively expensive, forthcoming electoral outcomes hold the potential to recalibrate foreign investor interest. This adjustment could foster a decrease in market volatility, anticipated to reflect in the VIX's stabilisation in the near-term," Mr. Singh said.

Mr. Vijayakumar said that the divergence in institutional activity is becoming stark this month."FIIs have turned sustained sellers and DIIs have turned sustained buyers in all trading days of this month, so far, with cumulative FII selling of ₹24,975 crore and cumulative DII buying of ₹19,410 crore," he said.

Mr. Vijayakumar added FPIs were aggressively selling Indian equities mainly due to Indian equity markets underperforming while Shanghai Composite and Hang Seng were outperforming by 3.96% and 10.9%, respectively, in the last one month. "The FPI strategy is to sell India which is expensive and buy China which is very cheap, mainly through Hong Kong," he added.

(*The writer is with The Hindu businessline*)

Union Bank Q4 net rises 18% helped by lower provisions

Press Trust of India
MUMBAI

State-owned Union Bank of India on Saturday reported 18.4% growth in consolidated net profit for the March quarter to ₹3,328 crore, helped by lower provisions.

For FY24, the lender reported a consolidated net profit of ₹13,797 crore against ₹8,512 crore in the year-earlier period.

Fourth-quarter standalone net profit rose to ₹3,311 crore, from ₹2,782 crore a year earlier.

Core net interest income (NII) grew 14.4% to ₹9,437 crore on 11.7% growth in advances and widening of net interest margin (NIM) to 3.1% from 2.97% in Q4 FY23.

MD and CEO A. Manimekhalai told reporters that for FY25, the bank was aiming for credit growth of 11-13% and deposit growth to be between 9-11% compared with 9.3% in FY24.

It, however, expects a fall in NIM to 2.8-3%, she said, adding that the targets would be reviewed midway through the year.

Non-interest income declined by over 10% to ₹4,707 crore, primarily due to halving of recoveries from written off accounts.

For FY25, the bank is targeting overall recoveries to come at ₹16,000 crore against over ₹18,000 crore in FY24.

The overall provisions declined to ₹3,222 crore from ₹4,041 crore in the year-earlier period.

The fresh slippages increased to ₹3,202 crore from ₹2,687 crore a year earlier, but the final stock of gross NPAs was lower because of help coming in on recoveries, upgradation and write-offs.

Khanij Bidesh India may acquire lithium asset in Australia: Rao

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Khanij Bidesh India Ltd. (KABIL) hopes to acquire a lithium block in Australia this year, Mines Secretary V. L. Kantha Rao said on Saturday.

KABIL, a joint venture of three PSUs to scout for mineral assets overseas, has been working in Australia for the last year, he added. "KABIL has the responsibility to look at other countries. We have to increase our efforts in Australia. We will have to ensure that during this financial year, we target one more asset," Mr. Rao observed.

But unlike Argentina, Australia would be a bit costly so the paid-up capital of KABIL will have to be increased. KABIL has a paid-up capital of ₹100 crore at present.

Lithium is the most important mineral for the energy transition, a fundamental component of lithium-ion batteries, which power electric vehicles and battery energy storage systems.

IIHL receives IRDAI's nod to buy Reliance Capital

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

IndusInd International Holdings Ltd. (IIHL) said it had received approval from the IRDAI on May 10 for the acquisition of Reliance Capital Ltd.

"The approval is subject to certain 'regulatory, statutory, and judicial' clearances/compliances," a company spokesperson said on Saturday.

IIHL "aims to close this transaction by the NCLT's stipulated date of May 27," the spokesperson added.

'Bridgestone to unveil market expansion strategy to push next 10 years of growth'

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

The strategy will also address India's positioning in the global market for Bridgestone

RAJARSHI MOITRA,
Chief Commercial Officer,
Bridgestone India

Bridgestone India, a wholly owned subsidiary of Bridgestone Corporation, Japan, is currently preparing a 10-year strategy to spearhead market expansions across India.

"India has been identified as a growth market and focus market for Bridgestone globally," Rajarshi Moitra, Chief Commercial Officer, Bridgestone India, told *The Hindu*. "We are working on a new business strategy that will spearhead the next orbit of our growth in the country. Our new India strategy for 10 years will kick in from calendar 2025," he said.

According to Mr. Moitra, India is the fastest growing and stable market for Bridgestone and the company has made strong investments here in the last over 25 years, including the latest chunk of $300 million it announced. "The new strategy will be aimed at building the market further and to continue to be a strong player in the premium tyre segment in the country. The strategy will also address India's positioning in the global market for Bridgestone," he added.

On the market scenario, Mr. Moitra said post the pandemic, Bridgestone had seen robust growth in India. The company's revenue grew 9% year-on-year during calendar 2023.

However, the industry in general saw subdued sales volumes in the last couple of quarters.

In the first quarter of CY24, the Original Equipment Manufacturer (OEM) segment had done a "low single-digit", while the after-market segment had been flattish, he said.

"In the short term, the industry is seeing some pressure. But long-term outlook is quite bullish as the macro economic scenario continues to be quite positive in terms of GDP growth and government investment," he said.

"As per our internal estimate, we expect the industry, in the long term to grow 5-6% in after-market and 4-5% in the OEM segment in the next five years," he added.

"It also indicates that the auto sector will continue to remain positive," Mr. Moitra said. More than 46 million units of tyres (for passenger car and SUVs) were sold in 2023 with after-market and OEMs forking out an almost equal share in the industry. In this calendar, the industry is expected to sell 48 million units of tyres, he said.

Adoption of Gen AI faster than PCs, smartphones, says Oracle

Mini Tejaswi
BENGALURU

Adoption of Generative AI (Gen AI) is happening at a faster pace than smartphones or PCs, said Oracle, a technology firm based in Austin, Texas.

"If one compares the first four years of many recent technologies, it is evident that adoption of Gen AI is happening at a faster pace than smartphones or PCs," said Chris Chelliah, senior vice president, Technology and Customer Strategy, Oracle, Japan & APAC.

According to him, Gen AI is at the forefront of many conversations of enterprises globally and has also changed the way Oracle had developed its new products.

"Today, not only is Oracle Generative AI supporting customers, it is also changing how Oracle itself develops new products," he said.

According to Saravanan Palanivel, Vice President, Cloud Engineering, Oracle India, AI's capability is growing rapidly as it is "getting better and faster."

For instance, it took over a decade for AI's handwriting recognition to be as good as the average human, but the learning curve for AI models to reach human parity for reading comprehension and language understanding has gotten significantly steeper.

"For speech recognition it took 17 years, handwriting recognition 14 years, image recognition 6 years, reading comprehension 2 years... to reach human parity," Mr. Palanivel said.

Eicher Motors sets aside capex of ₹2,200 cr. for FY25

N. Anand
CHENNAI

New offerings: Royal Enfield will be rolling out one or two products in all the platforms, said CEO B. Govindarajan. BIJOY GHOSH

Eicher Motors Ltd. (EML) has set aside a capex of ₹1,200 crore for Royal Enfield and ₹1,000 crore for VE Commercial Vehicles (VECV), for the current fiscal year, top company executives said on Saturday.

"For the current fiscal, we have set aside a capex of ₹1,200 crore mainly for development of new products including electric vehicles and international growth," said Royal Enfield CEO B. Govindarajan. "This will be financed through internal accruals and debt," he said during an interaction.

The CEO also said that the company was making substantial progress in development of electric motorcycles that would be unveiled during FY25. Besides, Royal Enfield will be rolling out one or two products in all the platforms, he said.

According to Mr. Govindarajan, Royal Enfield has expanded its international footprint by setting up its fifth completely knocked down (CKD) assembly unit outside India in Nepal, while the next one will come up in Bangladesh. Besides, it has made a debut in Turkey and established a wholly owned subsidiary in the Netherlands to cater to evolving consumers in the European Union (EU).

Q4 profit rises 18%

EML's consolidated net profit for the quarter ended March rose 18% YoY to ₹1,070 crore on higher sales volume. Revenue from operations rose 12% to ₹4,256 crore.

The company sold 2.28 lakh motorcycles against 2.15 lakh in the year-earlier period. Mr. Govindarajan said that FY24 saw EML's best ever performance. It also surpassed pre-COVID levels of growth.

VECV's net profit contracted to ₹242 crore from ₹315 crore, while total revenue increased by ₹275 crore to ₹6,275 crore. The board declared a final dividend of ₹51 per share.

"We had a remarkable year at EML and have reported exceptional performance across both Royal Enfield and VE Commercial Vehicles," EML MD & CEO Siddhartha Lal said at a press meet.

Asked about EVs, Mr. Lal said that as far as VECV was concerned, it had commenced sales of EV trucks and had the global unveiling of the new electric-first small commercial vehicle. VECV MD & CEO Vinod Aggarwal said the electric small commercial vehicle showcased at Bharat Mobility Global Expo "will mark a new growth segment for VECV in the 2.5-3.5 tonne category."

Measures in place to meet peak power demand in May, June

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The government has taken adequate measures to meet the estimated 235 GW peak power demand in May and 240 GW in June, according to an official statement. "With various measures, we have been able to successfully meet the peak evening power demand of 224 GW during April 2024," the Ministry of Power on Friday.

The power demand is projected to peak at 235 GW during the day-time and 225 GW during evening hours for May and 240 GW during day-time and 235 GW during evening hours for June 2024, it said in the statement.

The power ministry has estimated around 260 GW of peak demand during this summer season.

Elaborating on the measures, the ministry said section 11 directions have been issued to gas-based power plants besides coal-based units to make full capacity available for electricity generation. The optimisation of hydropower generation has made available an additional 4 GW for meeting the demand during May and June.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH MULTIPLE DISABILITIES (DIVYANGJAN)
(Dept.of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (Divyangjan), Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment, Govt.of India)
Muttukadu, East Coast Road, Kovalam (P.O), Chennai - 603 112. Tamil Nadu - India
Phone: 044 – 27472046, 27472113, 27472423
Accredited by NAAC : ISO 9001:2015

Course & Duration	Last Date for receipt of Application
M.Phil - Clinical Psychology * (2 Years)	15/07/2024
Bachelors of Physiotherapy (BPT) (4 ½ Years)	20/05/2024 (Admission through CET-2024, please visit http://admission.svnirtar.nic.in/) Or State Selection Committee, DME Govt. of Tamil Nadu
Bachelors of Occupational Therapy (BOT) (4 ½ Years)	
Bachelors in Prosthetics and Orthotics (BPO) (4 ½ Years)	20/05/2024 (Admission through CET-2024, please visit http://admission.svnirtar.nic.in/)
Bachelors in Audiology and Speech Language Pathology (B.ASLP) (4 Years)	
Post Graduate Diploma in Early Intervention PGDEI (1 Year)	15/07/2024
M.Ed. Special Education (Multiple Disabilities) (2 Years)	30/09/2024
B.Ed. Special Education (Multiple Disabilities) (2 Years)	04/09/2024
D.Ed. Special Education (Multiple Disabilities) (2 Years)	14/06/2024
Diploma in Indian Sign Language Interpretation* (2 Years)	15/07/2024
Diploma in Office Automation and Assistive Technology** (1 Year)	15/06/2024
Certificate Course in Care Giving (RCI) (12 Months)	14/06/2024

* Subject to approval **Eligible only for Divyangjan (PwD)
- No application fee for Divyangjan (PwD)
- Sponsorship available for North East Students
- For details on application process: eligibility, norms, guidelines and curriculum refer to the prospectus in www.niepmd.tn.nic.in
- OBC/SC/ST/PwD Scholarships as per TN Govt./State Govt./National Scholarship Portal schemes are applicable

Sd/-
DIRECTOR

ODISHA STATE SEEDS CORPORATION LIMITED
(A GOVERNMENT UNDERTAKING)
SANTARAPUR, BHUBANESWAR- 751002.
Tel-MD 0674-2340573, E-mail - mdosscltd456@gmail.com

NIT No.OSSC/Mktg(Hort)-94/2024

Short e-Tender Call Notice for Procurement of Certified Chilli Seed for Kharif - 2024

OSSC Ltd. invites short e-Tender only from Producers (and in case of GOI PSUs, their authorized Agencies) on item wise rate contract basis **for Procurement of Certified Chilli Seed for Kharif-2024** in double cover system through online mode only for the work below.

Name of the work	Purchase of Certified Chilli Seed for Kharif - 2024
No of work	One
Availability of bid documents in Portal	15.00 hours on dt.13.05.2024 to 17.00 hours of dt.20.05.2024
Last date of receipt of tender in portal	17.00 hrs of dt. 20.05.2024
Date and Time of Opening of Bid	10.30 hrs of dt. 21.05.2024

The detailed descriptions of crops, varieties, quantity, parameters, terms and conditions and other details of tender specified in the tender schedule would be made available in the e-Tender portal **www.tendersodisha.gov.in**. Any addendum/ corrigendum / cancellation can also be seen in the said website.

CAD-108: Sd/- **Managing Director, OSSC Ltd.**
OIPR-01106/11/0008/2425

30-year study links ultra-processed food to risk of early death

The Hindu Bureau

Higher consumption of most ultra-processed foods is linked to a slightly higher risk of death, with ready-to-eat meat, poultry, and seafood based products, sugary drinks, dairy based desserts, and highly processed breakfast foods showing the strongest associations, finds a 30-year U.S. observational study. The results were published in the journal *The BMJ*.

The researchers say not all ultra-processed food products should be universally restricted, but that their findings "provide support for limiting consumption of certain types of ultra-processed food for long term health". Mounting evidence links ultra-processed foods to higher risks of obesity, heart disease, diabetes and bowel cancer, but few long term studies have examined links to all causes and cause specific deaths, especially due to cancer.

To address this knowledge gap, researchers tracked the long-term health of 74,563 female registered nurses from 11 States in the Nurses' Health Study (1984-2018) and 39,501 male health professionals from all 50 U.S. states in the Health Professionals Follow-up Study (1986-2018) with no history of cancer, cardiovascular diseases, or diabetes at study enrolment.

Every two years participants provided information on their health and lifestyle habits, and every four years they completed a detailed food questionnaire. Overall dietary quality was also assessed using the Alternative Healthy Eating Index-2010 (AHEI) score. During an average 34-year follow-up period, the researchers identified 48,193 deaths, including 13,557 deaths due to cancer, 11,416 deaths due to cardiovascular diseases, 3,926 deaths due to respiratory diseases, and 6,343 deaths due to neurodegenerative diseases.

Compared with participants in the lowest quarter of ultra-processed food intake (average three servings per day), those in the highest quarter (average seven servings per day) had a 4% higher risk of total deaths and a 9% higher risk of other deaths, including an 8% higher risk of neurodegenerative deaths.

No associations were found for deaths due to cardiovascular diseases, cancer, or respiratory diseases. In absolute numbers, the rate of death from any cause among participants in the lowest and highest quarter of ultra-processed food intake was 1,472 and 1,536 per 100,000 person years, respectively.

The association between ultra-processed food intake and death varied across specific food groups, with meat, poultry, and seafood based ready-to-eat products showing the strongest and most consistent associations, followed by sugar sweetened and artificially sweetened beverages, dairy based desserts, and ultra-processed breakfast food. The association was less pronounced after overall dietary quality was taken into account, suggesting that dietary quality has a stronger influence on long term health than ultra-processed food consumption, note the authors.

Will cattle be the next lab for flu host-switching?

The co-expression of both human and avian receptors in the mammary glands of cows indicate susceptibility to viruses of both swine/human and avian origin

R. Prasad

Crucibles for reassortment of influenza virus genes

Reassortment is the process by which influenza viruses swap gene segments when two differing influenza viruses co-infect a cell

RAPID SPREAD: As of May 7, H5N1 virus has spread to 37 herds in nine States in the U.S.

- H5N1 virus has been detected in high concentrations in milk from infected dairy cattle and at levels greater than that seen in respiratory samples
- Higher concentration of virus in milk samples compared with respiratory samples strongly suggest that H5N1 pathogenesis in cattle differs from other mammals
- Influenza virus has greater propensity to infect the mammary glands of cows
- Both human and duck receptors are highly expressed in the mammary glands of cows
- The presence of human and duck receptors in the mammary glands provides an opportunity for the evolution of H5N1 viruses to easily spread animals to humans
- Pigs are called the 'evolutionary lab for flu host switching' due to the presence of human-flu and avian-flu host cell receptors in the respiratory tract
- Reassortment might help the avian flu virus to become better adapted to bind to human receptors and spread from birds to humans more easily

Cattle have so far not been associated with being infected on large-scale, and as a result, cattle have not been well studied as domestic hosts for influenza A virus species. In contrast to the notion that cattle are considered to be almost resistant to infection with influenza A virus, H5N1 virus, which was first detected in dairy cattle in Texas in late March, has rapidly spread to 37 herds in nine States in the U.S. as of May 7.

On April 24, the U.S. FDA said that in a nationally representative commercial milk sampling study of pasteurised milk, about one in five of the retail samples tested positive for bird flu viral fragments. A greater proportion of positive results were in milk from areas with infected herds. An NIH-funded study had found an absence of infectious virus in milk samples. The April 23 report of the FAO noted that the H5N1 virus was detected in "high concentrations in milk from infected dairy cattle and at levels greater than that seen in respiratory samples". That the concentration was less in the respiratory samples of the infected cows compared with the milk samples strongly suggests that the pathogenesis of the H5N1 virus in cattle differs from other mammals, says a study posted as a preprint; preprints are yet to be peer-reviewed.

One reason for dairy cattle milk containing high concentrations of H5N1 virus fragments could be the propensity of the virus to infect the mammary glands of cows as a previous study had found. On evaluating the expression of H5N1 receptors in the mammary gland, respiratory tract and cerebrum of cattle, the authors found both the human and the duck receptors to be highly expressed in the mammary glands. In the mammary gland, the human receptors and the duck receptors were found to be widely distributed in the alveoli but not in the ducts. Chicken-type influenza receptors were common in the cow respiratory tract. The high concentration of H5N1 virus fragments in milk from H5N1-infected cows could be due to local viral replication in the mammary glands of cows as H5N1 has a high affinity for the receptor, the authors say.

The study found that the chicken receptor was expressed on the surface of the respiratory epithelium in the upper respiratory tract and upper part of the lower respiratory tract, while human and duck receptors were either lacking or very limited in expression. However, in the lung alveolar cells, the researchers found all the receptors of humans, chickens and ducks being abundantly expressed.

The abundance of human and duck receptors in the mammary glands and the large presence of human, chicken and duck receptors in the lung alveolar cells of cows provides a perfect environment for the evolution of H5N1 viruses that can easily spread from animals to humans. The reason why pigs are called the "evolutionary lab for flu host switching" is precisely due to the presence of both the human-flu and avian-flu host cell receptors in their upper-respiratory tract, says Dr. Sam Scarpino from Northeastern University in a tweet. The latest study has found that cow mammary glands contain the same kind of mixed flu receptors seen in pigs.

"One of the key changes required for avian flu to transmit effectively in humans involves flu's hemagglutinin (HA) host cell receptor preference," Dr. Scarpino said in another tweet. "Currently the cell surface receptor that influenza uses in birds is subtly different from the one in the human upper-respiratory tract". But when pigs get infected with human and avian influenza viruses at the same time, the viruses can potentially undergo reassortment, wherein small segments of their genomes get swapped. The swapping might sometimes help the avian flu viruses to become better adapted to bind to human receptors and hence spread from birds to humans more easily. The H1N1 pandemic of 2009 was due to the reassortment of the virus in pig populations.

"The co-expression of both human and avian receptors in the mammary glands indicate susceptibility to viruses of both swine/human and avian origin. The co-expression of both receptors can make bovines to behave like a mixing vessel for new influenza A virus with increased zoonotic potential, the authors write.

With the mammary glands of cows harbouring receptors for both human-flu and avian-flu, "dairy cattle may have similar potential as pigs to serve as evolutionary intermediaries between avian and human flu".

The magpies of the Himalayas

SPEAKING OF SCIENCE
D. Balasubramanian

Magpies belong to the Corvidae family of birds that includes crows, jays and ravens. Birds of this family are generally considered to be noisy, inquisitive birds that in folklore from around the world have often been associated with omens, good or bad. In some European cultures, they accompany witches. An English rhyme, "One for sorrow, two for joy; three for a girl, four for a boy; Five for silver, six for gold; Seven for a secret never to be told," suggests that spotting a lone magpie brings bad news. But no one will deny that the magpies are striking in appearance, or that some of the most flamboyant species are found in the Himalayas.

From Kashmir to Myanmar, a few closely related blue magpie species are a common sight. The gold-billed magpie, *Urocissa flavirostris*, also called the yellow-billed blue magpie, has mischief in its eyes and occupies the high altitude zone between 2000 and 3000 meters above sea level. At slightly lower heights we find the red-billed magpie, and the blue magpie is found at lower altitudes where humans live in larger numbers.

High above: Gold-billed magpies occupy the high altitude zone between 2,000 and 3,000 meters above sea level. GETTY IMAGES

Trekking corridors

Best sightings of the yellow and red-billed varieties are in the trekking corridor in Western Sikkim that leads from the town of Yuksom, at 1,780 metres above sea level, to fabulous sights of the Kanchenjunga from near the Goche La pass at about 4,700 metres above sea level. The journey takes you from tropical moist broad-leaf forests at the lower altitudes through high sub-Alpine forests to a treeless Alpine landscape of juniper bushes. Somewhere in the middle are forests whose canopies close in over you, and an astonishing diversity and density of birds.

Field studies by zoologists at the Sikkim Government College have documented that over 250 species of birds are found in this zone, and at around 2,500 metres above sea level, you can see or hear nearly 60 individual birds in a five-minute time interval. The yellow-billed blue magpie is very often a part of this chorus. The body of the bird is about the size of a pigeon, but with a 45-centimeter-long tail, adding up to an overall size of 66 cm. While foraging for worms on the ground, the tail is pointed upward; while picking berries in trees, the tail swoops downward. The flight is characteristic too: a few quick wing beats, followed by long gliding movements.

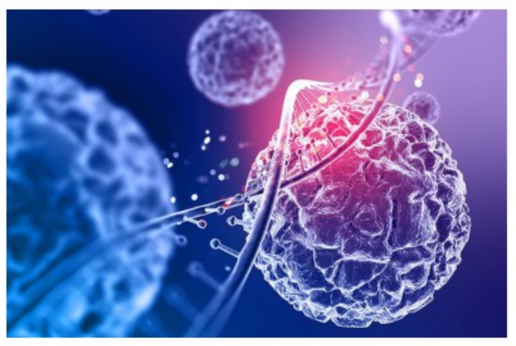
The yellow-billed blue magpie builds its nests at the forks of branches in rhododendron trees. The nest itself appears to be a hurried job of twigs, with a soft lining of grass in which three-six eggs are laid in May or June. Both parents take part in raising the young. As the nursery rhyme says, two for joy.

The blue magpie and the red-billed magpie are very similar in appearance too, though a little smaller. The blue magpie is less of a forest bird, and more often seen around villages. All the species can be spotted as solitary birds, in pairs, or noisy flocks of 8-10 birds.

As human presence in forests increases, there are worries about how well the birds can cope. The colorful flowers of rhododendrons attract tourists. To support tourists, villagers often resort to forest resources such as firewood. It is hoped that just like agriculture, tourism will also learn to be a sustainable trade.

(The article was written in collaboration with Sushil Chandani, who works in molecular modelling)

SNAPSHOTS



Early clinical trial sheds light on regulatory T cell therapies

Results from a new clinical trial shed light on the performance of infusions of immune-calming regulatory T cells for children with type 1 diabetes. The trial shows that a single dose of the cells can transfer over efficiently in children but does not show signs of preserving insulin-releasing cells in the pancreas, highlighting the need for further research. Researchers have theorized that supporting regulatory T cell activity - or even infusing these cells - could treat autoimmune disorders.

Areas at risk for malaria in Africa may decline: study

Areas at risk for malaria transmission in Africa may decline more than previously expected because of climate change in the 21st century, suggests an ensemble of environmental and hydrologic models. The combined models predicted that the total area of suitable malaria transmission will start to decline in Africa after 2025 through 2100, including in West Africa and as far east as South Sudan. The new study's approach captures hydrologic features that are missed with predictive models of transmission.

Fragment of human cerebral cortex reconstructed

Using more than 1.4 petabytes of electron microscopy imaging data, researchers have generated a nanoscale-resolution reconstruction of a millimeter-scale fragment of the human cerebral cortex, providing an unprecedented view into the structural organisation of brain tissue. The data reveal underappreciated aspects of the human temporal cortex, including the disproportionate number of glia over neurons and existence of powerful axonal inputs.

Question Corner

Strange trigger

Can heavy snowfall and rain contribute to some earthquakes?

A recent study has found that episodes of heavy snowfall and rain likely contributed to a swarm of earthquakes over the past several years in northern Japan. This is the first time that climate conditions have been found to initiate some quakes. The seismic activity in the region was surprisingly found to synchronise with certain changes in underground pressure, and those changes were influenced by seasonal patterns of snowfall and precipitation. Scientists suspect that this new connection between quakes and climate may not be unique to Japan. Since late 2020, hundreds of small earthquakes – earthquake swarms – have shaken up Japan's Noto Peninsula, in 2020 changes in seismic velocity appeared to be synchronised with the seasons. When it rains or snows, that adds weight, which increases pore pressure, which allows seismic waves to travel through slower. When the seismic velocity observations and the model of excess pore pressure were overlapped, they fit extremely well.

Readers may send their questions / answers to questioncorner@thehindu.co.in

What are the rules on contesting seats?

How many seats can a candidate contest? When were the guidelines amended?

Sreeparna Chakrabarty

The story so far:

When Congress leader Rahul Gandhi announced that he would contest from Rae Bareli in Uttar Pradesh, questions were raised on why he took the decision after the Kerala election was over – he is a contestant from Wayanad too. According to the Representation of the People Act (RPA), 1951, a candidate is permitted to contest an election from up to two constituencies, but he or she can hold only one seat at a time if elected from both.

Is there a cap?

A sub-section, 33 (7), of the RPA, allowing a candidate to contest from two seats, was introduced through an amendment in 1996, prior to which there was no bar on the number of constituencies from which a candidate could contest. However, Section 70 of the same Act stipulates that a candidate can hold only one seat at a time, regardless of whether he or she has been elected from more than one seat. Thus, if a candidate wins from two seats, a byelection is necessary from the seat he or she vacates. Former Chief Election Commissioner N. Gopalaswami said the opposition to a candidate contesting from many seats was basically due to the fact that many byelections had to be conducted after polls were over. Since then, the Election Commission of India and the Law Commission have both proposed that the RPA Act should be further amended to allow one person to contest from only one seat, given that a candidate cannot hold two seats at the same time. Mr. Gopalaswami said this was proving to be difficult as "no politician would like to reduce it to one from two, and laws are made by parliamentarians."

> The Election Commission of India and the Law Commission have both proposed that the Representation of the People Act should be further amended to allow one person to contest from only one seat

Moreover, a person has to be a voter in a particular State to contest Assembly polls from there. But to contest in a Lok Sabha election, a person can be registered as a voter in any constituency of the country. If a person is a registered voter in any constituency, he or she can contest from any seat in India, except Assam, Lakshadweep and Sikkim.

What is the minimum age to contest?

The minimum age for a person to contest Lok Sabha and Assembly polls is 25 years, while one can become a member of the Rajya Sabha or the State Legislative Council only at 30 years. There is no minimum educational qualification needed to contest general elections in India. Candidates must be citizens of India, registered in some constituency of the country as a valid voter and must not have been convicted of any offence punishable by more than two years.

How can a candidate be disqualified?

A person shall be disqualified from being chosen as or being a member of either House if he holds any office of profit under the Government of India or the Government of any State; if he or she is of unsound mind and stands so declared by a competent court; if he or she is an undischarged insolvent; if he or she is not a citizen of India or has voluntarily acquired the citizenship of a foreign state.

Under the RPA Act, if a person is convicted of any offence and sentenced to an imprisonment of two years or more, this will lead to his disqualification to contest elections. Even if this person is out on bail, after the conviction and his appeal is pending for disposal, he or she is disqualified from contesting an election. For some categories of serious offences, one may incur disqualification for any conviction, regardless of the quantum of punishment.

Over the years, what are some of the changes undertaken by the ECI regarding candidates?

The ECI has amended the rules for political party funding during elections. The new regulations include decreasing the cash donation limit from ₹20,000 to ₹2,000. The Electoral Bond Scheme, notified in January, 2018, allowing anonymous contributions to limit use of cash, was scrapped by the Supreme Court in 2024. For the 2024 polls, the ECI has banned cash transportation in bank vehicles after sunset. The Commission is also monitoring non-scheduled chartered flights for cash, liquor, and drug movement. ADR founder member Jagdeep Chokkar says there have been many interventions, but the desired effect has not come about as parties have found a way to circumvent it.

Mr. Gopalaswami points out that no law has been brought in with regard to muscle power of candidates. "That falls under criminal law which are enacted by politicians themselves," he says. But he adds that the presence of central paramilitary forces has been able to put a stop to practices like booth-capturing, a point strongly rebutted by Prof. Chokkar who says the "use of para-military forces is a shame in a democracy."

The Karnataka HC ruling on EPF benefits

On what grounds has a 15-year-old amendment to the law been struck down? How will withdrawing employees' provident fund benefits affect international workers in India, and Indian workers abroad? What is the response from the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation?

Aaratrika Bhaumik

The story so far:

The Karnataka High Court recently struck down a 15-year-old amendment to the law which permits the incorporation of foreign workers in the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF). Accordingly, it quashed the special provisions for international workers under paragraph 83 of the Employees' Provident Funds Scheme, 1952 (EPF Scheme) and paragraph 43A of the Employees' Pension Scheme, 1995 (EP Scheme) for being "unconstitutional and arbitrary."

What are EPF benefits for foreign workers?

The Employees' Provident Funds and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952 is India's pivotal social security legislation and regulates three main schemes – the EPF Scheme, the EP Scheme and the Employees' Deposit-Linked Insurance Scheme, 1976. It is administered through a statutory body – the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO). An establishment with a minimum of 20 employees is required to register with the EPFO and make Provident Fund (PF) contributions for eligible employees. In 2008, the 1952 Act was amended to bring international workers or expatriates within the fold of the statute. As per the amendment, international workers employed in India for a minimum period of six months are mandated to make PF contributions which include 12% of the employee's total salary. A matching contribution is made by the employer for each of these workers. However, contrary to their domestic counterparts, the wage ceiling of ₹15,000 per month for availing PF benefits does not apply to international workers. Withdrawal of PF accumulations by international workers based in India is permitted only upon retirement from service in the establishment at any time after the attainment of 58 years of age; upon retirement on account of permanent incapacity for work due to bodily or mental incapacity and pursuant to any stipulations under existing Social Security Agreements (SSAs).

> 'The law was never designed to universally extend PF benefits to employees irrespective of the salaries drawn by them'

ISTOCKPHOTO

What are Social Security Agreements?

They are bilateral instruments executed to protect the social security interests of workers posted in a foreign country. Indian employees who are posted in other countries by their Indian employers continue to make social security contributions in India as per domestic law. They may also be required to make similar contributions under the host country's laws. However, due to restrictions on withdrawals and stipulations relating to their duration of stay, such employees rarely reap benefits from PF contributions made outside India. As a result, SSAs are executed to avoid such double coverage – coverage under the social security laws of both the domestic as well as the host countries. India has SSAs with 21 countries.

What does the ruling say?

The Court highlighted that the primary aim of the 1952 Act was to safeguard industrial workers by offering them an alternative to pensions. However, it clarified that the law was never designed to universally extend PF benefits to employees irrespective of the salaries drawn by them. "The EPF & MP Act was (1952 Act) enacted with a view to see that those in lower salary brackets get retirement benefits and by no stretch of the imagination, could it be said that the employees who draw lakhs of rupees per month should be given the benefit under the enactment," the Court asserted.

Justice K.S. Hemalekha pointed out that an Indian employee working in a foreign country which has an SSA with India continues to make PF contributions on a meagre sum of ₹15,000; however, a foreign worker is made to contribute PF on his entire salary even though both are international workers. Deeming this disparity unconstitutional, she observed, "The Government of India is unable to substantiate any nexus with the object sought to be achieved, para 83 is clearly discriminatory in treating the international workers of Indian origin and foreign origin differently and thus violative of Article 14 of the Constitution of India." Dismissing the government's contention that special benefits were extended to international workers as a result of existing international obligations, the judge reasoned, "There is no rational basis for this classification nor there is reciprocity that compels to classify foreign employees from non-SSA countries as international workers. The respondents neither have stated whether the Indian employees working in non-SSA countries [are] required to contribute their entire pay without statutory limit towards PF of that country. In the absence of parity and also in the absence of reciprocity, there is no justification to demand a contribution on the entire pay of a foreign employee from a non-SSA country."

How has the EPFO responded?

The Ministry of Labour and Employment through the EPFO has issued a statement saying that it was "actively evaluating the future course of action." An official told *The Hindu*, "The appeal is being prepared and the argument will be based on special provisions in the scheme that are drafted with specific purposes of protecting the interests of Indian workers abroad. The EPFO is also consulting representatives of employers and employees to clear apprehensions".

Referring to the SSAs executed with 21 countries so far, the EPFO's press release said, "These agreements aim to guarantee the uninterrupted social security coverage of employees during international employment. These agreements are very important for India for promoting international mobility and leverage the demographic dividend."

What are the implications?

Pooja Ramchandani, partner and head of the employment law practice at Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas, told *The Hindu* that while the High Court's ruling may have a persuasive value before the Courts outside of Karnataka, PF authorities can still enforce these provisions in other States in the interim period. This might result in employers having to continue with provident fund compliances for international workers in certain regions. "The question is not whether international workers should be extended provident fund benefits on account of their limited period of employment, it is whether there is a rationale for classification of foreign employees from non-SSA countries (as) different from Indian employees in terms of the rate of contribution," Ms. Ramchandani said. She also pointed out that India should consider introducing amendments to ensure that expats are treated at par with domestic workers with respect to provident fund benefits to attract foreign investments. Highlighting that the ruling is also likely to have an impact on India's existing SSAs with other countries, she added, "If the Karnataka High Court judgment is upheld by the Supreme Court, it remains to be seen what amendments it [India] will bring about in the law to continue the reciprocal arrangements enshrined in the SSAs."

(With inputs by A.M. Jigeesh)

How is India streamlining the pharma sector?

Why has the drug regulator tweaked norms for exports? Where does India stand as a drugs manufacturer? Does the change follow allegations of sub-standard medicines being exported? Will a centralising authority help, with several important drugs set to go off the patent list?

Bindu Shajan Perappadan

The story so far:

India's drug regulator, the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), has withdrawn powers delegated to State licensing authorities to issue NOCs (no objection certificates) for manufacture of unapproved, banned or new drugs for export purposes. This latest announcement covering drugs for export comes at a time when India has been under scrutiny for allegations of supplying substandard drugs causing health concerns in several countries. The CDSCO is now the sole authority for issuing manufacturing licences for drugs meant for export.

What is India's role in the pharma market?

India ranks third worldwide as a producer of drugs and pharmaceuticals by volume, exporting to around 200 countries/territories. The Indian pharmaceutical industry supplies 62% of the global demand for vaccines and is a leading supplier of DPT (diphtheria, pertussis and tetanus), BCG (Bacillus Calmette-Guérin, used primarily against tuberculosis), and measles vaccines. At least 70% of WHO's vaccines (as per the essential immunisation schedule) are sourced from India, the Centre had noted in a submission in Parliament.

> Local regulators will have to hand over details of all approvals given from August 2018 to May 2024 to the central drug regulator

GETTY IMAGES

What will be the impact?

India is a key player in the international generic medicine market and any change in policy has a direct impact on manufacturers and importers, say industry insiders. The centralising of the licensing authority is significant, they point out, because according to a study conducted by the Department of Pharmaceuticals, India needs to get ready to take advantage of drug sales worth $251 billion going off-patent this coming decade.

The study notes: "In the years between 2022 and 2030, the pharmaceutical sector in India will undergo landmark changes as several drugs are expected to go off-patent and provide an opportunity for the entry of generic products. Expiry of patents is very promising for the Indian generic drug market as it is expected to expand and grow further with inclusion of these new drugs. With ongoing developments, India has started focusing on self-reliance at a large scale. Hence, it is imperative to identify these drugs beforehand, draft and implement strategies which help in their timely entry into the market by promoting generic drug manufacturing."

What are the challenges?

India is dealing with several challenges, including tackling intellectual property rights, lack of research and development etc. The study points out that understanding the political, economic, sociocultural, technological, environmental, and legal factors is vital for assessing the opportunities and challenges in the pharmaceutical market in India. "The industry must adapt to changes in these external factors, navigate regulatory requirements, leverage technology advancements, and align their strategies with the evolving needs of the pharmaceutical industry to succeed in the global market," it noted. Speaking about the change, Raheel Shah, business development director, BDR Pharmaceuticals, says the move is welcome as the centralisation of NOCs will formalise the Indian pharma industry. "This will result in the efficiency of the overall process along with bolstering pharma exports to key international markets. It will help to bring uniformity in protocols, achieve the target of reaching $450 billion by 2047," he adds.

What about the quality of manufacturing?

An article in the *British Medical Journal* titled, 'Indian government cracks down on 18 drug companies for poor quality manufacturing', noted that the Indian government had cancelled the licences of over 10 pharmaceutical companies as part of a crackdown on poor quality manufacturing. The action last March came after an inspection of 76 drug firms across 20 States. "The government is also understood to have given notices to a further 26 companies for not complying with good manufacturing processes. The Indian pharmaceutical industry has an estimated 10,500 companies, with drug exports having more than doubled in the past decade. But the industry has faced a series of scandals of late, including a World Health Organization investigation into four contaminated cough syrups that caused acute kidney injuries and were linked to the deaths of 66 children in the Republic of the Gambia last year," it added.

In what seems like an effort to keep a strict watch, the latest order by CDSCO states that pharmaceutical companies will have to get their NOCs from the zonal offices of CDSCO online before applying for manufacturing licences from their respective State/UT drug regulators. The Drugs Controller General of India, Rajeev Singh Raghuvanshi, said the decision was taken to facilitate the application process. In 2018, the CDSCO had permitted State and UTs' drug licensing authorities to grant permissions to export some specific drugs. As per the new order, local regulators will have to hand over the details of all the approvals they have given from August 2018 to May 2024 to CDSCO.

The centralisation of powers hasn't come as an overnight development, says an industry expert. The Central government's advisory group on drugs had earlier this year noted that getting NOCs from local drug regulators for pharmaceutical products is a tedious process, leading to delays. Says Harish K. Jain, president, Federation of Pharma Entrepreneurs: "We don't anticipate any major impact as far as costing or delays with this latest move. Export of goods is on the Union List. Also, the central authority was always the Central government; the power to hand out licences for export of drugs was delegated to States a few years ago."

Opening the gates of hell

Rafah

Despite international warnings and pleas, Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, seems determined to invade the southern Gaza city where 1.5 million Palestinians, most of them refugees, are living in filthy overcrowded shelters, streets and beaches

Stanly Johny

The pre-war population of Rafah, the southernmost city of the Gaza strip sharing a border with Egypt's Sinai Peninsula, was 1,70,000. Today, seven months after Israel launched its war on Gaza, following Hamas's October 7, 2023 crossborder attack in which at least 1,200 people were killed, as many as 1.5 million people are living in Rafah. Many of them are camping on the streets and beaches, while others are packed into filthy, overcrowded makeshift shelters. Rafah is now a "gigantic refugee camp", Jan Egeland, Secretary-General of the Norwegian Refugee Council, said in February. According to a doctor who served in Rafah, the city is a "closed jail" with faecal matter running through streets so crowded that there is barely space for medics' vehicles to pass, Reuters reported. Medics are struggling to supply even basic aid and prevent the outbreak and spread of diseases. According to Action Aid, every single person in Gaza, a majority of whose population is now jammed in Rafah, "is hungry and people have just 1.5 to 2 litres of unsafe water per day to meet all their needs".

Israel wants to launch a full-scale invasion on this Rafah.

Rafah has always been a flashpoint in the Israel-Palestine conflict, given its territorial proximity to Egypt. After the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, triggered by the declaration of the state of Israel in historical Palestine, Rafah came under Egyptian rule along with other parts of the Gaza Strip. Tens of thousands of Palestinians, who were displaced from their homes when the Jewish state was created, were settled in Gaza. During the Suez Crisis, Rafah came under attack when the Israeli troops were marching towards Sinai through Gaza. On November 12, 1956, the Israeli Defence Forces (IDF) raided a refugee camp in Rafah, killing at least 111 Palestinians, which came to be known as the 'Rafah massacre'.

After the Six-Day War of 1967, the entire Gaza, including Rafah, came under Israel's direct military occupation. Israel would retain its direct control over the enclave until 2005. After the latest war began on October 7, Israel ordered over 1 million Palestinians living in northern Gaza to evacuate. Most of them fled their homes and moved to southern cities such as Khan Younis and Rafah. When Khan Younis was attacked, there was another exodus of refugees towards the south. Today, the lion's share of Rafah's population are internally displaced Palestinians.

PHOTO CREDIT: AP

The U.S.clearly warned Israel against launching a full-scale invasion of Rafah, arguing that such an attack would kill more Palestinian civilians. AP

War and talks

The past week saw dramatic developments in the Gaza war. The U.S.clearly warned Israel against launching a full-scale invasion of Rafah, arguing that such an attack would kill more Palestinian civilians. But Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed that Israel would go ahead with the plan to invade Rafah, defying international pressure, warnings and pleas. But Mr. Netanyahu is also under pressure to bring the remaining hostages back.

Israel says 128 hostages abducted on October 7 are still in Hamas captivity, though many of them are feared dead. There are growing protests in Israel, asking the government to strike deal with Hamas to bring the hostages back. Israel and Hamas, helped by mediators such as the U.S., Egypt and Qatar have held multiple rounds of talks in Cairo for a ceasefire deal.

While the finer details of the ceasefire proposal are yet to be made public, reports in Egyptian and Saudi media suggest that the mediators have proposed a three-phase deal that would see the release of all hostages and Palestinian prisoners and eventually bring the war to an end. In the first phase, Israel is expected to cease fire for 40 days and free Palestinian prisoners in return for the release of 33 hostages. In the second phase, the ceasefire would be extended by 42 more days, while all the remaining living hostages would be released. The third phase of the proposals are the most contentious, according to Arab media. Israel wants Hamas to release the bodies of all hostages and Hamas wants a comprehensive, lasting ceasefire and full IDF withdrawal from Gaza.

Israel says no to both Hamas demands. IDF troops have been deployed in northern and central Gaza, effectively carving the northern tip of the strip as a buffer zone between Israel proper and Gaza's population (who have been pushed to the south). If Israeli troops withdraw from Gaza, Israeli officials say, Palestinians as well as Hamas militants would return to areas close to the border. And if Israel agrees to a lasting ceasefire, the remaining Hamas battalions (Israeli officials say four Hamas brigades are present in Rafah) would survive.

When Israel launched the war on October 7, it made its twin objectives public: dismantle Hamas and release the hostages. Seven months after the war, in which roughly 35,000 Palestinians have been killed, Israel has not met either of the objectives. One practical solution to the hostage crisis is to strike a deal with Hamas. But Hamas would release the hostages only in return for a ceasefire. And if Mr. Netanyahu agrees to a ceasefire, Hamas would survive. This is the dilemma the Israel faces.

Earlier, Biden administration officials had said Hamas was the major stumbling block for a ceasefire. Secretary of State Antony Blinken stated on May 4 that "the only thing standing between the people of Gaza and a ceasefire is Hamas". Two days later, however, Hamas's Doha-based leader Ismail Haniyeh said the group had accepted the ceasefire proposal suggested by the mediators in Cairo.

The Hamas announcement came hours after the IDF ordered at least 1,00,000 people to evacuate from Rafah. Mr. Netanyahu's government immediately rejected the Hamas offer, saying it did not meet Israel's core demands. He later said Israel would never agree to end the war in Gaza as part of a deal with Hamas. In other words, the Israelis seemed determined to go ahead with the Rafah attack plan.

Tensions with U.S.

Mr. Netanyahu's tough line on Rafah has created tensions in Israel's ties with the U.S. Earlier, President Biden had said a full-scale attack on Rafah without a proper plan to protect civilians would be a redline for him. Last week, he announced that the U.S. would not supply offensive weapons to Israel if it goes ahead with the attack plan. The United Nations has repeatedly warned that any attack on the overcrowded Rafah would lead to a "humanitarian catastrophe".

If Mr. Netanyahu abandons the plan to attack Rafah and cuts a deal with Hamas for hostages, his government could fall as his far-right allies such as Itamar Ben-Gvir and Bezalel Smotrich have already warned against such a move. If he goes ahead with the plan, more Palestinian civilians would be killed, Israel would further be isolated globally and tensions would rise with the U.S. But Mr. Netanyahu does not seem to bother. "If Israel has to stand alone, it will stand alone," he said on May 10, less than a month after American, British, French and Jordanian defence systems, along with the IDF, shot down most of the drones and cruise and ballistic missiles launched by Iran towards Israel.

THE GIST

- After the 1948 Arab-Israeli war, triggered by the declaration of the state of Israel in the historical Palestine, Rafah came under Egyptian rule along with other parts of the Gaza Strip
- During the Suez Crisis, Rafah was attacked when the Israeli troops were marching towards Sinai through Gaza. On November 12, 1956, the IDF raided a refugee camp in Rafah, killing at least 111 Palestinians
- After the Six Day War of 1967, the entire Gaza, including Rafah, came under Israel's direct military occupation. Israel would retain its direct control over the enclave until 2005

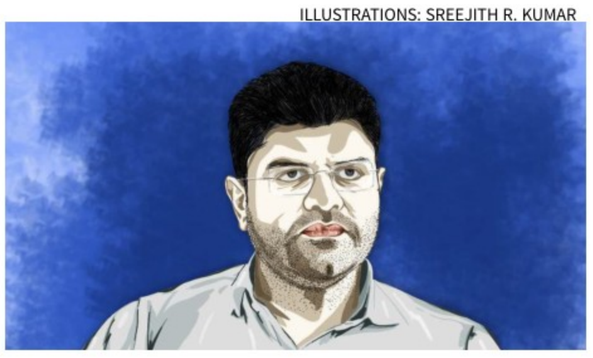
Rebel prince

Dushyant Chautala

The former BJP ally, who has offered support to the Congress to form an alternative government in Haryana, is fighting to keep his party legislators together

Vikas Vasudeva

ILLUSTRATIONS: SREEJITH R. KUMAR



Haryana is in political turmoil after three independent MLAs withdrew their support for the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government, and its former coalition partner, the Jannayak Janta Party (JJP), offered support to the Congress to form an alternative government.

As the State continues to witness breakneck political developments, 36-year-old Dushyant Chautala, leader of the JJP who became the Deputy Chief Minister of Haryana in 2019, is now facing a stiff task of keeping his flock of 10 legislators together, and fighting to stay relevant in the State's politics. His political acumen and leadership skills are at the test in the midst of the Lok Sabha election and in the run-up to the Assembly election, which is due to be held in October-November this year.

To bring down the government led by his old ally, the BJP, Mr. Chautala has offered support for the Congress from "outside". He has also asked Governor Bandaru Dattatreya to call for an immediate 'floor test' to determine the majority of the government.

In the 90-member State Assembly, which currently has an effective strength of 88, the BJP government, led by Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, appears to be in a minority with only 43 MLAs by its side, two short of majority. But BJP leaders assert that their government is under 'no threat' and that if there be any need, "other MLAs" will support them, an indicator of potential support from disgruntled JJP MLAs.

Disgruntled MLAs

At least three disgruntled MLAs of the JJP, annoyed over Mr. Chautala's 'style of working', have met the senior BJP leader and former Chief Minister, Manohar Lal Khattar, fuelling speculation that they may switch sides, and even explore legal possibilities of splitting the JJP. At this juncture, Mr. Chautala, the co-founder of the JJP, is staring at a crisis as he is trying to secure his party, which was formed in 2018, after breaking away from the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD).

His party won 10 seats in the 2019 Assembly elections, and it played a key role in forming the coalition government in Haryana.

After the split, the INLD and its breakaway faction fought to claim the political legacy of its founder, Chaudhary Devi Lal, a former Deputy Prime Minister and a noted farmer leader. In the 2019 Assembly elections, Mr. Chautala proved his mettle by winning 10 seats. The INLD saw a near washout as the party could win only one seat. The 2018 split in the INLD followed a bitter power struggle between two brothers – Ajay Chautala, who was then serving a 10-year jail sentence in a case related to a teacher recruitment scam, and Abhay Chautala, who was then the leader of Opposition in the Haryana Assembly and was running the party since 2013. Amid the family feud, Ajay and his son Dushyant floated the JJP.

Four and half years after the government was formed in the State, the BJP-JJP alliance broke down a couple of months ago, amid differences over seat-sharing for the general election.

In the run-up to the polls, the JJP, which draws its support largely from the agrarian class (primarily the Jat community), found itself at the receiving end of farmers' anger as many farmer organisations confronted party leaders while they were visiting villages during the election campaign.

Aggressive stance

Of late, Mr. Chautala has been taking an aggressive stance against the BJP. The attempt was aimed at reclaiming the party's core support base, which seemed to have taken a beating after the year-long farmers' agitation against the BJP government at the Centre. As the BJP faced farmers' wrath over the now repealed agricultural laws and demand for higher support price, the JJP, the BJP's ally in the state, also faced the heat.

As the JJP is going through a rough patch, Mr. Chautala has twin problems at hand – one to curb the apparent rebellion within the party and the other to offset the resentment among farmer groups. Almost five years ago, he led the party to be a kingmaker in Haryana's politics. Today, he is fighting not to let the party he co-founded end up as a fringe group.

The gradualist

John Swinney

The SNP leader takes on the role of First Minister of Scotland at a tremulous time, when the party faces internal divisions, frustrated allies and a weakened economy

Joan Sony Cherian

On May 8, 60-year-old John Ramsay Swinney, a veteran of the Scottish National Party (SNP), was sworn in as Scotland's First Minister. Mr. Swinney takes up the reins from Humza Yousaf, the former First Minister who stepped down following a threat of no-confidence vote against him, after he ripped up his party's coalition agreement with the Scottish Greens over climate change commitments. This left the SNP with only 63 seats in the Holyrood (Scottish parliament), that is, two seats short of a majority. Mr. Swinney was able to hold the party in power by winning the support of 64 members of parliament and by the abstention of the Scottish Greens.

Being the third First Minister since Scotland's last election in 2021, after Nicola Sturgeon and Mr. Yousaf, Mr. Swinney said the appointment was "something of a surprise" but an "extraordinary privilege".

Mr. Swinney has held many a political office in his long career. He was head of the SNP from 2001 to 2004 as opposition leader and has held Cabinet positions under Alex Salmond and Ms. Sturgeon. He also served as Deputy First Minister under Ms. Sturgeon, and is the longest serving member to hold the position. In 2016, he was appointed Cabinet Secretary for Education and Skills, a role in which he was widely criticised.

In 2020, he was subject to a no-confidence vote after he was accused of bringing in an exam system that unfairly penalised students from deprived areas. Even though he won the motion, in 2021 he stepped down as Education Secretary and took over the responsibility of post-COVID recovery. By 2023, Mr. Swinney had resigned from his Cabinet roles and taken a backseat in the party until the call for a new leadership arose.

Fight for independence

Mr. Swinney assumes office in the week that marks the 25th anniversary of the devolution of the Scottish parliament. Scotland has had a long-standing demand for independence from Britain, which rings strong to this day. It is out of this demand for self-governance that Scotland was granted devolved powers in 1999 after a nationwide referendum. Devolved powers mandate that Scotland can form legislation on issues such as health, transport and education while the power to legislate on defence, foreign policy, trade, immigration, and currency is reserved with Westminster.

Mr. Swinney joined the SNP at the age of 15 for its aspiration of independence. While he started his parliamentary career at Westminster in 1997, he was also elected to the first Scottish parliament in 1999. Mr. Swinney is part of what is called the gradualist faction within the SNP, where he believes that independence is a gradual goal with devolution of powers being one of the steps towards complete autonomy. However, the other faction, known as the fundamentalists, are sceptical of devolution and consider it a smokescreen to deter and delay full independence.

Keeping in line with the gradualist tradition, Mr. Swinney has stated that efforts towards independence would be focussed on winning a majority in the forthcoming elections. He believes only through good governance and a strong economic policy will the public have faith in an independent Scotland divorced from the British Union.

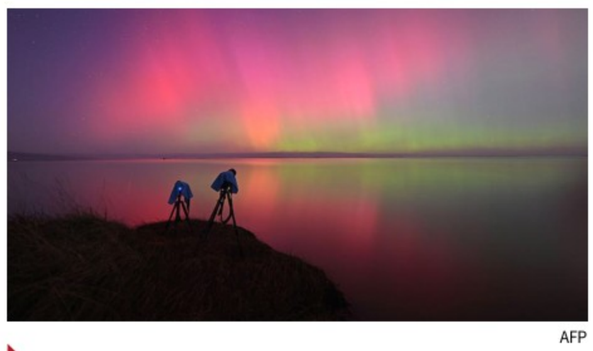
He scrapped the position of Minister of independence, in charge of commissioning white papers on how Scotland will function as an independent nation, so that immediate concerns such as the cost of living crisis and the implications of Brexit can be given priority. Refuting allegations of undermining the goal of Scottish independence, the new First Minister reiterated that, "independence is going to be front and centre of our mission – it always has been – and the work will continue."

Other than the divide on how independence should be achieved, the power-sharing agreement with the Greens and policies on gender affirming care have polarised members of the SNP much further.

While Mr. Swinney has pitched himself as a man able to "listen to other people's perspectives" and heal divides, he has his hands full with a weakened party, a divided parliament and an economy reeling under inflation.

PARIS

First 'extreme' solar storm in 20 years brings spectacular auroras



AFP

Earth was set to be struck by powerful solar storms on Saturday, a day after the most extreme events in two decades triggered spectacular celestial light shows and threatened possible disruptions to satellites and power grids. The first of several coronal mass ejections (CMEs) came just after 2130 IST on Friday. AFP

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar to visit China next week

REUTERS

Pakistan's newly-appointed Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar will embark on a three-day official visit to China on Monday, during which he will meet top Chinese leaders and review bilateral relations, including the upgradation of the multi-billion dollar China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) project. PTI

MALE

Maldives says 76 Indian military personnel replaced by civilians

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

Maldives Minister of Foreign Affairs Moosa Zameer on Saturday said 76 Indian military personnel were replaced by civilian employees of the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited which manufactured the two helicopters gifted by India, thus ending the suspense over the exact number of those repatriated at the insistence of Male. PTI

WARSAW

Poland PM vows to strengthen security at EU border with Belarus

REUTERS

Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk travelled to the country's border with Belarus, which is also the European Union's external border with the autocratic state, and pledged to do more to strengthen security along its entire eastern frontier. Mr. Tusk accused Belarus, Russia's ally, of encouraging migrants to try to cross into the EU. AP

U.S. slams Israel's use of American weapons

Agence France-Presse
RAFAH

The United States has issued a stunning criticism of Israel's use of American weapons in the Gaza war, after Israeli forces intensified operations around the southern city of Rafah.

Israel's main international ally said in a report released on Friday that it was "reasonable to assess" that Israel has used weapons in ways inconsistent with international humanitarian law. But the State Department report said it could not reach "conclusive findings" and stopped short of blocking weapons shipments.

Relations between the two allies slumped after U.S. President Joe Biden said he would halt some arms deliveries if Israel went ahead with a full-scale assault on Rafah.

Israel expands operation in overcrowded Rafah city

Tel Aviv orders new evacuations in Gaza's southern city of Rafah forcing tens of thousands to move; more than 1.4 million Palestinians, half of Gaza's population, are sheltering in Rafah

Associated Press
RAFAH

Israel ordered new evacuations in Gaza's southern city of Rafah on Saturday, forcing tens of thousands more people to move as it prepares to expand its military operation closer to the heavily populated central area, in defiance of growing pressure from close ally the United States and others.

Israel's military also said it was moving into an area of devastated northern Gaza where it asserted that the Hamas militant group has regrouped.

Israel has now evacuated the eastern third of Rafah, which is considered the last refuge in Gaza. The United Nations and others have warned that Israel's planned full-scale Rafah invasion would cripple humanitarian operations and cause a disastrous surge in civilian casualties. Rafah borders Egypt near the main aid entry points, which already have been affected. Israeli troops have captured the Gaza side of the Rafah crossing, forcing it to shut down.

U.S. President Joe Biden has said he will not provide offensive weapons to Israel for Rafah. On Friday, the U.S. said there was "reasonable" evidence that Israel had breached international law protecting civilians in the way it conducted its war against Hamas – the strongest statement yet that the Biden administration has made on the matter.

In response to the U.S. report, Ophir Falk, foreign policy adviser to Israel's Prime Minister, said that Israel acts in compliance with the laws of armed conflict and the Army takes extensive measures to avert civilian casualties, including alerting people to military operations via phone calls and text messages.

More than 1.4 million Palestinians – half of Gaza's population – have been sheltering in Rafah.

No respite: Palestinians evacuate after Israeli launched a ground and air operation in the eastern part of Rafah on Saturday. REUTERS

UAE slams Netanyahu for saying Gulf state could help run Gaza

Reuters
CAIRO/DUBAI

The UAE hit out at Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Saturday after he said the Gulf state could be involved in aiding a future government in Gaza after the war.

The prominent and influential Gulf state, is one of few Arab states with official diplomatic ties to Israel, which it has maintained through Israel's more than six-month war in Gaza, although relations appear to have become frayed.

Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan rebuked Mr. Netanyahu in an early morning post on X, saying Abu Dhabi denounced the Israeli leader's comments.

Flash floods kill more than 300 people in Afghanistan

Associated Press
ISLAMABAD

Flash floods from unusually heavy seasonal rains in Afghanistan have killed more than 300 people and destroyed over 1,000 houses, the UN food agency said on Saturday.

The World Food Program said it was distributing fortified biscuits to the survivors of one of the many floods that hit Afghanistan over the last few weeks, mostly the northern province of Baghlan, which bore the brunt of the deluges on Friday.

In the neighbouring Takhar province, state-owned media outlets reported the floods killed at least 20 people.

Zabihullah Mujahid, the chief spokesman for the Taliban government, posted on the social media platform X that "hundreds ... have succumbed to these calamitous floods, while a substantial number have sustained injuries."

Mujahid identified the provinces of Badakhshan, Baghlan, Ghor and Herat as the worst hit. He added that "the extensive devastation" has resulted in "significant financial losses."

The Taliban Defence Ministry said in a statement on Saturday that the country's air force has already begun evacuating people in Baghlan and has rescued a large number of people stuck in flooded areas and transported 100 injured people to military hospitals in the region.

An Afghan boy shovels mud from the courtyard of a house following flash floods after heavy rainfall in Baghlan province on Saturday. AFP

Russia takes five villages in Ukraine's Kharkiv region

Reuters
MOSCOW

Russian troops have also taken over the village of Keramik in the Donetsk region further south

Russia said on Saturday that its forces had taken five border villages in Ukraine's Kharkiv region, where Russia launched an offensive on Friday, exploiting its increasing advantage on the battlefields of eastern Ukraine.

In its briefing on Saturday, the Defence Ministry said that Russian forces had taken the villages of Pletenivka, Ohirtseve, Borysivka, Pylna and Strilechna, all of which are directly on the Russian border.

The briefing also said that Russian troops had taken the village of Keramik in the Donetsk region further south, where Moscow has made slow but steady advances since seizing the longtime Ukrainian stronghold of Avdiivka in February.

New offensive

Ukrainian officials said on Friday that Russia had launched a new cross-border offensive against Kharkiv region, which is centred around Kharkiv city, Ukraine's second largest.

Russia kept up its attacks in the Kharkiv region on Saturday and was trying to advance further, Kharkiv Governor Oleh Synyehubov said.

Panama mulls closing its 'transit' migrant route

Associated Press
PANAMA CITY

Panama is on the verge of a dramatic change to its immigration policy that could reverberate from the dense Darien jungle to the U.S. border.

President-elect José Raúl Mulino says he will shut down a migration route used by more than 5,00,000 people last year. Until now, Panama has helped speedily bus the migrants across its territory so they can continue their journey north.

Whether Mr. Mulino is able to reduce migration through a sparsely populated region with little government presence remains to be seen, experts say.

"Panama and our Darien are not a transit route. It is our border," Mr. Mulino said after his victory with 34% of the vote in Sunday's election was formalised on Thursday evening. He will take over as president on July 1.

As he had suggested during his campaign, the 64-year-old lawyer and former Security Minister said he would try to end "the Darien odyssey that does not have a reason to exist."

Exponential growth

The migrant route through the narrow isthmus grew exponentially in popularity in recent years with the help of organised crime in Colombia, making it an affordable, if dangerous, land route for hundreds of thousands.

It grew as countries like Mexico, under pressure from the U.S. government, imposed visa restrictions on various nationalities including Venezuelans and just this week Peruvians in an attempt to stop migrants flying into the country just to continue on to the U.S. border.

But masses of people took the challenge and set out on foot through the jungle-clad Colombian-Panamanian border. A crossing that initially could take a week or more eventually was whittled down to two or three days as the path became more established and entrepreneurial locals established a range of support services.

Tough luck: Until now, Panama has helped speedily bus migrants across its territory so they can continue their journey north. AP

Dr. B.R. AMBEDKAR UNIVERSITY DELHI
Established by the Act of Legislative Assemblty of national Capital Territory of Delhi

RECRUITMENT NOTICE FOR TEACHING POSTS

No. AUD/07/Acad./2024 **Dated: 07.05.2024**

In supersession of all recruitment advertisement for teaching positions as advertised by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Univesity Delhi viz- Advt. No. AUD/01/Acad./2021 dated 10.04.2021, Advt. No. AUD/16/Acad./2022/Acad. Ser. dated 22.04.2022 and Advt. No. AUD/25/Acad./2023 dated 25.02.2023 & 12.05.2023 where the posts remained unfilled and vacant are being notified again as per the details given below for which the fresh advertisement is notified and fresh applications are invited.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University Delhi is a State University established through Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University Delhi Act, 2007 by the Legislature of the National Capital Territory of Delhi. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar University Delhi is one of the few universities in India with the core objective of promoting the study of humanities and social sciences and it recognizes these disciplines as pivotal to the understanding and imagination of a society in transition. University's aim is to reconceptualise social sciences with innovative curriculum and pedagogic processes. The University is currently offering undergraduate, postgraduate and research degree programmes at its four campuses located in Delhi, at Kashmere Gate, Karampura, Lodhi Colony and Qutab Institutional Area. The University invites online applications from the eligible candidates for faculty positions (Professor, Associate Professor and Assistant Professor) on regular basis in the following disciplines as given below. The details are given as under:

Sl. No.	School	Discipline	Professor (Pay Level-14)	Associate Professor (Pay Level-13A)	Assistant Professor (Pay Level-10)
1.	School of Vocational Studies	Vocational Studies/ Tourism & Hospitality/ Retail Management/ Early Childhood Education/ Accounting in Finance/ Education	UR-1	03 (UR-2 & OBC-1)	03 (SC-1, ST-1 & UR-1)
2.	School of Business, Public, Policy & Social Entrepreneurship	Management	UR-1	03 (UR-1, OBC-1 & ST-1)	04 (UR-3 & SC-1)
3.	School of Culture and Creative Expression	Literary Art/ Creative Writing	-	UR-1	UR-1
		Film Studies	-	-	OBC-1
		Performing Arts/ Performance Studies	OBC-1	-	-
		Visual Art	UR-1		UR-1
4.	School of Global Affairs	Global Studies	SC-1	-	02 (OBC-1 & ST-1)
		Urban Studies	02 (SC-1 & ST-1)	SC-1	-
5.	School of Law, Governance and Citizenship	Law or Any Social Science/ Humanities Discipline	OBC-1	02 (OBC-1 & SC-1)	-
6.	School of Undergraduate Studies	Economics	UR-1	UR-1	-
		History	OBC-1	02 (SC-1 & EWS-1)	-
		Psychology	-	OBC-1	-
		Social Science and Humanities	UR-1	02 (SC-1 & EWS-1)	03 (UR-1, EWS-1 & OBC-1)
		English	OBC-1	ST-1	-
		Mathematics	-	UR-1	-
		Sociology	-	OBC-1	-
7.	School of Human Ecology	Ecology and Environmental Studies	ST-1	-	-
8.	School of Liberal Studies	Sociology	-	UR-1	-
		Economics	-	UR-1	02 (UR-1 & ST-1)
9.	School of Education Studies	Education	02 (EWS-1 & UR-1)	-	OBC-01
10.	School of Education Studies Assistant Professor in Liberal Discipline and Pedagogy	History	-	-	OBC-01
		Political Science	-	-	UR-01
		English	-	-	ST-01
		English Communicative Skills	-	-	EWS-01
		Hindi Communicative Skills	-	-	OBC-01
11.	School of Human Studies	Psychology	-	UR-1	-
		Disability Studies	UR-1	-	-
12.	School of Design	Design	EWS-1	EWS-1	OBC-01
13.	School of Development Studies	Development Studies	-	OBC-1	-
14.	School of Letters	English	UR-1	-	UR-01
TOTAL POSTS			18	24	25

Out of above 67 positions, 05 position reserved for the persons with disabilities in the following category as details given below:
i) Deaf and Hard of Hearing (Category 'b' as mentioned in the DoPT OM dated 15.01.2018)- **01 post**
ii) Multiple Disability (Category 'e' as mentioned in the DoPT OM dated 15.01.2018)- **01 post**.
iii) Locomotor disability including cerebral palsy, leprosy cured, dwarfism, acid attack victims and muscular dystrophy (Category 'c' as mentioned in the DoPT OM dated 15.01.2018) – **02 posts**
iv) Blindness and low vision (Category 'a' as mentioned in the DoPT OM dated 15.01.2018) – **01 post**
Note: The functional requirements and suitable category of Benchmark Disability for the above categories shall be regulated as per the Gazette of India Notification dated 07.01.2021 notified by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment along with the other instructions issued from time to time by the Govt. of India (DoPT OM dated 15.01.2018)/ GNCT of Delhi.

(UR-Unreserved, SC-Scheduled Caste, ST-Scheduled Tribe, OBC-Other Backward Class, EWS-Economically Weaker Sections)

For details, please visit University website **https://aud.delhi.gov.in** for Qualifications, General Instructions, Eligibility Criteria, online application form, payment of fee & other details.
Commencement of online application for all posts: 15.03.2024
Last date to apply online has been extended. Now the last date is: 27.05.2024 (up to 23:59hrs)
The Last date of receiving hard copy of application form: 03.06.2024 (up to 17:30 hrs)
A hard copy of the online application along with self-attested required documents, mentioning the name of the post/discipline on the top of the envelope, must reach at the following address:-
DEPUTY REGISTRAR (ACADEMIC SERVICES), ROOM No.3, DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR UNIVERSITY DELHI,
LOTHIAN ROAD, KASHMERE GATE CAMPUS, DELHI – 110 006

DIP/Shabdarth/Classified/0056/24-25 **REGISTRAR**

Lothian Road, Kashmere Gate, Delhi – 110 006, Email: hr@aud.ac.in

Directorate of Higher Education, Govt. of NCT of Delhi

SATISFIED

It was a great innings, says GT's Sai Sudharsan on his century

VIJAY SONEJI

Gujarat Titans batter Sai Sudharsan talked about his 51-ball 103 scored against CSK. "It was a great innings, very happy to execute (the plans) in this game. I think the wicket was great to bat on. It was great to watch Gill bat, learning things from him," Sai Sudharsan said.

PENALISED

Gujarat Titans captain Gill fined ₹ 24 lakh for slow over rate

VIJAY SONEJI

GT captain Shubman Gill has been fined ₹ 24 lakh for maintaining slow over rate during the match against CSK. It was his side's second over rate offence of the season, and subsequently rest of the playing XI members, including the Impact Player, were individually fined either ₹ six lakh or 25 per cent of their respective match fees.

HIGH PRAISE

Sometimes, you have to doff the cap and say well played: Fleming

VIJAY SONEJI

CSK coach Stephen Fleming said his side was shell-shocked by the assault from GT openers Shubman Gill and B. Sai Sudharsan, who scored brilliant centuries. "It was the batting of high calibre. Sometimes, you have to doff the cap and say well played, and on this occasion, I thought those two were great."

BEING REALISTIC

'Jake would have been surprised to be named in Australia T20 squad'

K. MURALI KUMAR

Ricky Ponting said Jake Fraser-McGurk was not disappointed about his omission from Australia's T20 squad. "Only a few weeks ago he turned up here as a replacement player. The farthest thing in his mind would have been the World Cup. He has been electrifying for us [DC]. But he would have been more surprised to be named than left out."

Knight Riders punch their ticket for the playoffs

A disciplined bowling performance helps the home side clinch an 18-run win over Mumbai Indians in a rain-hit contest after Venkatesh's 21-ball 42 and lower-order hitting take KKR to 157

IPL-17

Amitabha Das Sharma
KOLKATA

Kolkata Knight Riders realised a playoff berth with a convincing 18-run win over Mumbai Indians in a rain-truncated IPL fixture at the Eden Gardens on Saturday. This was the ninth victory for KKR, which tallied 18 points from 12 matches to remain on top of the standings.

The Knight Riders posted a challenging 157 for seven after MI opted to field. With rain forcing the match to start an hour and 45 minutes late, the game was reduced to 16 overs a side.

In reply, MI failed to consolidate on a fine start and finished at 139 for eight.

V for Victory: Venkatesh and Varun's efforts highlighted Kolkata Knight Riders' win. K.R. DEEPAK

Domination

KKR, which beat MI in a previous fixture at the latter's home by 24 runs, thus completed its dominance over the five-time champion in the current season.

MI openers – Ishan Kishan and Rohit Sharma (Impact Player) - struck a nice partnership and scored 59 in the PowerPlay while tearing apart the KKR pace attack.

The spin duo of Sunil Narine and Varun Chakaravarthy sent back the two batters.

Narine got the vital breakthrough by dismissing Kishan 40 (22 balls, 5x4, 2x6) in the seventh over before Rohit (19 in 24 balls), who was struggling with his shot making, got out to Varun.

MI's chase lost direction hereafter as the rest of its batting folded up offering little resistance.

Tilak Varma put in his bit with a stroke-filled 17-ball 32 but that was not enough for the visitor to taste success.

Earlier, MI got the ideal start, sending the otherwise explosive KKR opening pair of Narine and Phil Salt back to the dugout in the first seven balls.

Venkatesh Iyer stabilised the KKR innings with a quick-fire 42 (21 balls, 6x4, 2x6) and later on Nitish Rana (33), Andre Russell (24), and Rinku Singh (20) provided a rear charge to take the KKR total past 150, which proved enough in the end.

SCOREBOARD

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS
Phil Salt c Kamboj b Thushara 6 *(5b, 1x6)*, Sunil Narine b Bumrah 0 *(1b)*, Venkatesh Iyer c Suryakuymar b Chawla 42 *(21b, 6x4, 2x6)*, Shreyas Iyer b Kamboj 7 *(10b, 1x4)*, Nitish Rana run out 33 *(23b, 4x4, 1x6)*, Andre Russell c Kamboj b Chawla 24 *(14b, 2x4, 2x6)*, Rinku Singh c Kishan b Bumrah 20 *(12b, 2x6)*, Ramandeep Singh (not out) 17 *(8b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Mitchell Starc (not out) 2 *(2b)*; Extras (lb-3, w-3): 6; Total (for seven wkts. in 16 overs): 157.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-6 (Salt, 0.5 overs), 2-10 (Narine, 1.1), 3-40 (Shreyas, 4.1), 4-77 (Venkatesh, 8.1), 5-116 (Rana, 11.6), 6-125 (Russell, 12.6), 7-148 (Rinku, 15.2).

MUMBAI INDIANS BOWLING
Thushara 3-0-31-1, Bumrah 4-0-39-2, Kamboj 3-0-24-1, Hardik 3-0-32-0, Chawla 3-0-28-2.

MUMBAI INDIANS
Ishan Kishan c Rinku b Narine 40 *(22b, 5x4, 2x6)*, Rohit Sharma (**Impact Player in place of Thushara**) c Narine b Varun 19 *(24b, 1x4, 1x6)*, Suryakumar Yadav c Ramandeep b Russell 11 *(14b, 1x4)*, Tilak Varma c Salt b Harshit 32 *(17b, 5x4, 1x6)*, Hardik Pandya c Arora b Varun 2 *(4b)*, Tim David c Shreyas b Russell 0 *(3b)*, Nehal Wadhera run out 3 *(3b)*, Naman Dhir c Rinku b Harshit 17 *(6b, 1x4, 2x6)*, Anshul Kamboj (not out) 2 *(2b)*, Piyush Chawla (not out) 1 *(2b)*; Extras (b-4, lb-2, nb-1, w-5): 12; Total (for eight wkts. in 16 overs): 139.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-65 (Kishan, 6.5), 2-67 (Rohit, 7.5), 3-87 (Suryakumar, 10.5), 4-91 (Hardik, 11.4), 5-92 (David, 12.1), 6-117 (Wadhera, 13.6), 7-136 (Dhir, 15.1), 8-137 (Tilak, 15.3).

KNIGHT RIDERS BOWLING
Arora (**Impact Player in place of Nitish Rana**) 2-0-16-0, Starc 1-0-11-0, Harshit 3-0-34-2, Narine 3-0-21-1, Varun 4-0-17-2, Russell 3-0-34-2.

Toss: Mumbai Indians; **PoM:** Varun.
KKR won by 18 runs.

Next assignment

KKR: May 13 vs **GT**
Ahmedabad, 7.30 p.m.

MI: May 17 vs **LSG**
Mumbai, 7.30 p.m.

Royals will look to open qualification door this time

Tarun Shastry
CHENNAI

Rajasthan Royals' campaign has been impressive in this edition, with eight wins out of its 11 matches so far. Knocking on the doors of qualification, it suffered defeats – against SRH and DC – in its last two games.

On Sunday, Sanju Samson's men will look to get back to winning ways against an inconsistent CSK and seal a spot in the playoffs.

"We should have qualified earlier but our last two games were really close. The second half is probably the most important and we have set it up nicely by winning a lot of games in the first half. We don't want to leave it too late and put pressure on ourselves," said Royals all-rounder Donovan Ferreira at a media interaction here on Saturday.

"If we can win this game, it gives us a better chance of finishing in the top two. Playing against Chennai is always big, they are a good team. It can go either way, but if we play our brand of cricket, then it will go our way.

"I think the team that assesses the conditions quickly and adapts well will emerge on top. Being an away game, we want to adapt fast and execute our plans," he said.

Super Kings face the heat in a crucial contest

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

As Chennai Super Kings prepares to take on Rajasthan Royals in its final home league match at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium here on Sunday, the atmosphere will be feverish for more than one reason.

First, it is an afternoon game in the middle of peak summer here, and the mercury has been soaring for a while now. More importantly, CSK is facing the heat after its 35-run loss to Gujarat Titans on Friday and might need to win its remaining two games to qualify for the Playoffs.

But beyond these considerations, the stakes are high because there is a sense of foreboding surrounding this clash. It is a question that is on everybody's lips. Could this be M.S. Dhoni's last time in Chennai? A few years ago, the former India skipper had said he wanted to end his T20 career in Chennai.

With the city set to host the last two playoff games (Qualifier-2 and Final), fans will hope it won't be the case. A win for CSK brightens its chances of finishing in the top four and gives the fans another opportunity to see their favourite cricketer.

However, it will be challenging for the misfiring Super Kings against a strong Royals. The constant changes haven't helped, and the defending champion will hope the players can raise their levels and sign off in style at home.

Meanwhile, Sanju Samson's side, which needed just one win to seal its qualification, stumbled in the last two games against Sunrisers Hyderabad and Delhi Capitals. While the lack of runs from the middle-order is a concern, Royals has enough firepower with bat and ball to extend its four-match winning streak against CSK.

Rising temperature: The mercury level may have an impact on the players' performance. B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

TODAY'S MATCHES

Chennai, 3.30 p.m.
HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: **28**
CSK 15 | RR 13
PREVIOUS MEETING
RR won by 32 runs, 2023

Bengaluru, 7.30 p.m.
HEAD-TO-HEAD
Played: **30**
RCB 18 | DC 11 | NR 1
PREVIOUS MEETING
DC won by seven wickets, 2023

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 (SD & HD) & JIO CINEMA

Capitals, in Pant's absence, have their task cut out against Royal Challengers

N. Sudarshan
BENGALURU

Rishabh Pant's absence will loom large when Delhi Capitals and Royal Challengers Bengaluru spar in a must-win clash at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium here on Sunday.

The DC skipper has been suspended for one match after his team maintained a slow over-rate against Rajasthan Royals on May 7. It was Pant's third such penalty, triggering the ban.

With five wins out of the last seven games, fifth-placed DC, riding on the batting might of Pant, Jake Fraser-McGurk, Abishek Porel et al., was looking good for the playoffs. But the side will now have to do without its maverick batter and top-scorer Pant (413 runs at SR 156.43).

Axar Patel will lead in his absence and it helps that the left-arm spinner has been one of DC's standout players.

In 12 games this season, the 30-year-old has bowled 40 miserly overs at an economy rate 7.32, an astonishing number in an IPL where totals in excess of 240 have become par for the course.

But in a rejuvenated RCB, DC will find a tough opponent. Faf du Plessis' men lost seven of their first eight matches, but have strung together four successive wins to still have a shot at the playoffs.

A settled batting line-up led by the in-form Virat Kohli has been instrumental in this turnaround, and so has the blossoming of the spin-combination involving leggie Karn Sharma and left-armer Swapnil Singh.

However, the weather could prove a spoiler. After a scorching summer, the parched souls in the Garden City have joyously welcomed evening showers this past week. But for once, they will want the rain to stay away.

Up for the challenge: Axar Patel, who will lead in Pant's absence, has been one of DC's standout players. K. MURALI KUMAR

Points table

	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Kolkata Knight Riders (Q)	12	9	3	18	1.428
Rajasthan Royals	11	8	3	16	0.476
Sunrisers Hyderabad	12	7	5	14	0.406
Chennai Super Kings	12	6	6	12	0.491
Delhi Capitals	12	6	6	12	-0.316
Lucknow Super Giants	12	6	6	12	-0.769
Royal Challengers	12	5	7	10	0.217
Gujarat Titans	12	5	7	10	-1.063
Mumbai Indians (E)	13	4	9	8	-0.271
Punjab Kings (E)	12	4	8	8	-0.423

Q: Qualified E: Eliminated

I am sure Axar will lead the team really well: Ponting

N. Sudarshan
BENGALURU

Delhi Capitals head coach Ricky Ponting backed Axar Patel to come good as captain in the absence of the suspended Rishabh Pant for the tie against Royal Challengers Bengaluru here on Sunday.

"He has been vice-captain for the last couple of seasons and he is very sensible and understands the game really well," said Ponting, on match-eve.

"And he is really excited. We started talking about it a couple of days ago when there was a possibility that Rishabh might be banned. So, he has got his head around it. I am sure he will lead the team really well."

Best batter

Apart from being the leader, Pant has been his side's best batter. With David Warner's fitness still wobbly – he has missed the last four matches – DC will need to dip into its reserves.

"Rishabh has been one of the best players this IPL and not having him is a loss. But it is also a great opportunity for others.

"We have to think about an Indian middle-order player. David Warner has trained really strongly. We hope he is available for selection."

INBRIEF

Gvardiol double puts Manchester City on top

Manchester City hit the top of the Premier League with one week of the season left when two goals by Josko Gvardiol and one each from Phil Foden and Julian Alvarez sealed a 4-0 demolition of Fulham on Saturday.

Important results: Premier League: Fulham 0 lost to Manchester City 4 (Gvardiol 13, 71, Foden 59, Alvarez 90-pen); Tottenham 2 (Porro 32, Micky van de Ven 82) bt Burnley 1 (Larsen 25). **Serie A:** Frosinone 0 lost to Inter Milan 5 (Frattesi 19, Arnautovic 60, Buchanan 77, Martinez 80, Thuram 84).

Ireland posts maiden T20I win over Pakistan

Andrew Balbirnie's 77 helped Ireland to its first T20I victory over Pakistan as the hosts won by five wickets in Dublin on Friday.

The scores: Pakistan 182/6 in 20 overs (Babar Azam 57) lost to Ireland 183/5 in 19.5 overs (Andrew Balbirnie 77).

Rutuja-Paige pair claims doubles title in Fukuoka

Rutuja Bhosale and Paige Hourigan beat Haruna Arakawa and Aoi Ito 3-6, 6-3, [10-6] in the doubles final off the $60,000 ITF women's tennis tournament in Fukuoka, Japan, on Saturday. It was the second successive doubles title for Rutuja and Paige, who had won in China last month.

Tandon ousts Faraz, enters World squash second round

India's Ramit Tandon started well in the World squash championships with a 11-1, 11-3, 11-3 win over USA's Faraz Khan in Cairo.

Pavandeep and Sriram set up Play Smart's 100-run victory

Half-centuries from R. Pavandeep (91) and Sriram Nikshipth (87) helped Play Smart defeat Six Cricket Academy by 100 runs in a Tiger Cup U-12 match in Bengaluru on Saturday.

The scores: RXCA 147/4 in 30 overs (Adithya Kamisetty 34) lost to RCA, Mysore 148/5 in 25 overs (J. Rachith 34); TSCA, Hubli 213/7 in 30 overs (Farhan Shaikh 79, Aryan Pradeep 46) bt Kapil CC 209/6 in 30 overs (Samvrith Kulkarni 87, Vishruth 63, S.K. Anirudh 3/19); Play Smart 251/3 in 30 overs (R. Pavandeep 91, Sriram Nikshipth 87, Jaipreeth 25) bt Six Cricket Academy 151/8 in 30 overs (Prithvi Pradeep 43).

LIVE TELECAST

Bangladesh vs Zimbabwe: 5th T20I, FanCode, 9.30 a.m.
IPL: Star Sports 1 (SD & HD) & JioCinema, 3.30 & 7.30 p.m.
Serie A: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & JioCinema, 4, 6.30, 9.30 p.m. & 12.15 a.m. (Monday)
LaLiga: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & JioCinema, 5.30, 7.45, 10, 12.30 a.m. (Monday)
Bundesliga: Sony Sports Ten 2 (SD & HD) & LIV, 7, 9 & 11 p.m.
Ireland vs Pakistan: 2nd T20I, FanCode, 7.30 p.m.
Premier League: SS Select 1 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 9 p.m.

Neeraj's return will be the biggest highlight

Besides the Asian Games gold medallist, local favourite Jena will be another star attraction; the National Anti-Doping Agency is expected to be active during the event

FEDERATION CUP

Y.B. Sarangi
BHUBANESWAR

All in readiness: India chief coach Radhakrishnan Nair, centre, said he was looking forward to javelin competition. BISWARANJAN ROUT

World and Olympic champion javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra's return to a domestic event after his historic performance in the Tokyo Games three years ago will be the biggest highlight of the National Federation athletics meet, starting on Sunday.

Besides Asian Games gold medallist Neeraj, silver medallist and local favourite Kishore Jena will be another big attraction as fans will get a chance to see both of them in action after watching them on television during their season-opening performances in Doha Diamond League.

As per Athletics Federation of India (AFI) rules, the athletes who have crossed 75m will directly participate in the javelin final on Wednesday. Three will make it to the final through the qualifying round.

India chief coach Radhakrishnan Nair looked forward to the javelin competition, which would also feature D.P. Manu and Shivpal Singh.

Apart from the two Olympic qualified throwers, Asiad gold medallist shot putter Tajinderpal Singh Toor, long jumper Jeswin Aldrin, triple jumpers Praveen Chitravel, Abdulla Aboobacker, and the 4x400m relay team members, including Amoj Jacob, Muhammad Ajmal, Dandi Jyothika Sri, and Subha Venkatesan, will be some of the well known athletes competing here.

Jacob, who ran the anchor leg in the Olympic qualifier in Bahamas, said he was yet to overcome jet lag but chose to participate in the event.

However, several top names, including steeplechaser Avinash Sable, Parul Chaudhary, quartermilers National record holder Muhammad Anas, Arokia Rajeev, Rajesh Ramesh and Noah Nirmal Tom, long jumper Ancy Sojan, 800m Asian Games medallist Harmilan Bains, will miss the event due to various reasons.

In view of some big names failing dope tests this year ahead of the Olympics, the National Anti-Doping Agency is expected to be active during the event.

Inter-state meet to be a mandatory event

Sports Bureau
BHUBANESWAR

The AFI has said the National inter-state championships at Panchkula from June 27 to 30 will be a mandatory event for all the athletes barring some exceptions, including Neeraj Chopra who will compete in Europe closer to the Paris Olympics. The National Inter-state meet will be the last domestic competition for the athletes to qualify for the Olympics.

"The last date to qualify for the Olympics is June 30. Suppose we have four javelin throwers who have qualified, but we can only send three. It is mandatory to participate in Panchkula to prove themselves," chief coach Radhakrishnan Nair said on Saturday.

But AFI may consider some exceptions for world standard athletes like Neeraj, said Nair.

Domestic season set for a revamp by the BCCI

CRICKET

Amol Karhadkar
MUMBAI

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is set to reinvent the domestic season.

A four-member working group formed for the purpose has suggested splitting the Ranji Trophy into two halves and restructuring the Duleep Trophy for the forthcoming season.

The four-member group – including India men's head coach Rahul Dravid, NCA chief V.V.S. Laxman, men's chief selector Ajit Agarkar and former India pacer Abey Kuruvilla, BCCI general manager (domestic cricke) – met last week and finalised its proposals that have been submitted to BCCI secretary Jay Shah.

"The recommendations of the working group will be implemented in domestic cricket, subject to approval by the Apex Council," Shah said.

October start

According to the proposal, the Ranji Trophy will start in October second week soon after Irani Cup concludes and the first five league matches will take place with at least four days gap between matches. The limited-overs tournaments will then be played to enable IPL franchises to scout for talent ahead of the auction. The last two league rounds and the Ranji knockouts will then be scheduled from mid-January till early March.

It is also proposed to do away with the zonal format for the Duleep Trophy, instead starting the domestic season with the tournament "featuring four teams, selected by the national selectors".

The working group has made an attempt to address major grievances that were aired during the domestic season by various captains and coaches across the domestic arena.

Other major suggestions

Toss to be done away for C.K. Nayudu, visiting team to choose bat or field first

Revised points system with additional batting and bowling points to be tried out in C.K. Nayudu Trophy

Depending on the feedback, the changes to be incorporated into Ranji Trophy in 2025-26

The teams for the women's inter-zonal tournaments to be picked by national selectors

I feel I could have pushed more even in the last throw: Neeraj

DOHA DIAMOND LEAGUE

Uthra Ganesan
DOHA

Neeraj. AFP

Two centimetres. That's less than an inch, 1/3rd of an average index finger. That was the margin of victory for Jakub Vadlejch in the Doha Diamond League on Friday night, the Czech javelin thrower pushing Olympic and world champion Neeraj Chopra to second spot.

In the previous edition here, Neeraj had pipped Vadlejch by 4cm for top spot. He had done the same at the 2022 World Championships, this time taking silver.

At the forefront

And while the likes of Anderson Peters have massive throws against their names, it's these two who have been at the forefront of the world javelin for the past few years, their consistency separating them from the rest.

On Friday too, Vadlejch had four throws over 84m with two fouls. Neeraj had the same, except with one foul and one 82m mark. It's this consistency that Neeraj has been keen to maintain even though he admitted he didn't feel great out on the field, for reasons unknown. "Overall I thought it could have been better but the best thing is the consistency. My warm-up throw was really good but the first throw went bad. More importantly, the body didn't feel very good, I don't know why, but I still managed an 88m-plus throw," he reflected after the event.

The 27-year old, however, isn't too perturbed going forward. "We will prepare better for future competitions. But if I could throw 88m without feeling too good, I want to test myself and see how much I can manage when everything is right. There will be at least three or four more competitions before Paris but such contests help us push each other," he insisted.

Better effort

The one thing Neeraj wasn't happy about was his effort, which by his own admission was less than optimum. "I am satisfied with my performance but perhaps not with my effort, I feel I could have pushed more even in the last throw. It's good that this is the first competition of the season, there is still time. Now we know what to do, we will work on it," he admitted.

Jakub, meanwhile, was more forthcoming. "I think we are rivals but also, I hope, good friends. Today's 2cm victory is a little revenge for the previous year. But the main goal is Paris. Next up will be Golden Spike (in Ostrava), next chance to try and beat him," he laughed.

It's a challenge Neeraj is more than willing to accept. "Challenge accepted, I am always ready for a good battle. Next time, it won't be just 2cm but much more, in our favour," he signed off.

Anderson set to retire after Lord's Test against the West Indies

Reuters
LONDON

Swansong: Anderson is set to end a glittering Test career at Lord's at the start of the English summer. AP

England's James Anderson will retire from Test cricket after the first match of the series against West Indies at Lord's this year, he said on Saturday, ending a 21-year career in which he became the most successful ever pace bowler.

The 41-year-old has taken 700 wickets, behind only Sri Lankan spinner Muttiah Muralitharan (800) and Australia's Shane Warne (708) on the all-time list.

Having made his debut for England at Lord's in 2003, Anderson will finish his illustrious career at the same ground his 188th Test, two weeks shy of his 42nd birthday.

"It's been an incredible 20 years representing my country, playing the game I've loved since I was a kid. I'm going to miss walking out for England so much," Anderson said in a statement. "But I know the time is right to step aside and let others realise their dreams just like I got to, because there is no greater feeling."

Nicknamed the "Burnley Express", Anderson did not say if he would continue playing county cricket for his club Lancashire who renamed the Pavilion End at Old Trafford as the James Anderson End.

"I'm excited for the new challenges that lie ahead, as well as filling my days with even more golf," Anderson added.

"Thank you to everyone who has supported me over the years, it's always meant a lot, even if my face often doesn't show it."

England's first match of a three-test series against the West Indies takes place from July 10-14.

Richard Thompson, chair of the country's cricket board (ECB), said Anderson deserved a fitting send-off at the home of cricket.

"I don't think we'll ever see a bowler to match Jimmy again. It has been an honour as an England fan to watch him, and to marvel at his skill with the ball," Thompson said.

"To still be bowling at the top of his game at 41 is remarkable, and he is a true inspiration and role model for peers and younger generations alike."

Nadal falls to Hurkacz in Rome Open second round

Agence France-Presse
ROME

Rafael Nadal was knocked out of the Rome Open in the second round on Saturday with a 6-1, 6-3 loss to Poland's Hubert Hurkacz.

Other results: Men: Second round: Medjedovic bt Davidovich Fokina 7-6(4), 6-4; Etcheverry bt Seyboth Wild 6-3, 7-5; Jarry bt Arnaldi 6-2, 7-6(6); Paul bt Karatsev 6-4, 6-2. **Women: Third round:** Swiatek bt Putintseva 6-3, 6-4; Badosa bt Shnaider 5-7, 6-4, 6-4; Kerber bt Sasnovich 6-3, 7-6(4); Osaka bt Kasatkina 6-3, 6-3.

Karnataka denies a knock-out spot for Kerala girls

BASKETBALL

Sports Bureau

Karnataka beat Kerala 65-63 to deny a knock-out berth in the women's section in the 74th National junior basketball championship in Indore. The defeat not only denied a pre-quarterfinal spot for Kerala but also got it relegated to level-2 for the next season. Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, and Maharashtra also made the quarterfinals of the women's section, along with Karnataka.

The results (league):
Men: Group-A: Uttar Pradesh 94 (Jatin 25, Vedansh Ranot 21, Harshit Tomar 21, Kunal Kumar Singh 18) bt Delhi 79 (Harsh 26, Sahil Dhaka 24, Anshuman Singh 18); Punjab 72 (Sahibjit Singh 25, Jaddu Man 14, Amandeep Singh 13, Ujwal 12) bt Kerala 65 (Niyukth Salil 18, Vinay Sankar 14, Jins Joby 12); Chandigarh 98 (Gaurav Kumar 32, Ravinder Kaushik 23) bt Delhi 73 (Anshuman Singh 17, Kismat 16, Sahil Dhaka 12, Kunal Kumar 10).
Group-B: Tamil Nadu 100 (Harish Aravind 18, Abhimanyu 16, Mithunvel 15) bt Andhra Pradesh 42 (Muhammed Shakeel 12). Rajasthan 68 (Ajay Kumar 15, Nitesh Kumar 13, Mayank Jawa 11, Pradhyumn Shekhawat 10) bt Odisha 26.
Women: Group-A: Karnataka 65 (Aadhya Gowda 15, Tanusree Tarun 14, Aditi Subramaniam 14) bt Kerala 63 (Amanda Rocha 20, Feba Fatima 10); Madhya Pradesh 83 (Gunvi Agarwal 30, Kushpal Singh 23) bt Tamil Nadu 71 (Theja Sri 22, Juana Chrisolin 16, Antheya Daisy16).
Group-B: Gujarat 92 (Aahana George 29, Niyathiba Gohel 24, Archi Patel 22) bt Punjab 79 (Komalpreet Kaur 26, Nadar Dhillon 16, Gagandeep Kaur 12, Krishanpreet Kaur Mangat 10); Uttar Pradesh 66 (Sakshi Saini 20, Anushka Chouhan 16, Harsshita Goutham 12, Ruby Rajput 10) bt Chhattisgarh 43 (Ishika Singh 14, Komaldeep Kaur 11). Maharashtra 84 (Aananya Bhavsar 38 Trisha Sharma 18) bt Uttar Pradesh 71 (Ruby Rajput 16).

Rethin & Kriish win ITF juniors double title

TENNIS

Sports Bureau

Rethin Pranav, *left*, and Kriish Tyagi won the doubles title in the J300 ITF junior tennis tournament in Nonthaburi, Thailand.

The Indian pair beat Kuan-Shou Chen and Ke Hau Hung of Taiwan 7-6 (4), 6-1 in the final.

Both Rethin and Kriish had lost in the third round of singles, in the competitive field.

Anish Bhanwala stays on top in rapid fire pistol

Sports Bureau

Olympic quota winner Anish Bhanwala gained a stranglehold over the top spot in 25m rapid fire pistol with a score of 587 in the Olympic shooting trials in Bhopal on Saturday.

Anish improved his aggregate to gain a strong lead over the other Olympic quota winner in the event, Vijayveer Sidhu.

The third best, Bhavesh Shekhawat lost some ground with a score of 577, but was still breathing down the neck of Vijayveer for the second spot among the five. In the women's 25m sports pistol, world record holder and Olympic quota winner Rhythm Sangwan shot a top score of 586, but found herself in the fourth spot behind Manu Bhaker, Simranpreet Kaur Brar and Esha Singh in the overall aggregate. Rhythm had slipped with scores of 576 and 566 in the first two trials in Delhi.

While Manu stands strong at the top, Simranpreet and Esha look to be fighting for the second spot from the event. Rhythm has been faring well in air pistol and thus can aspire to gain her Olympic entry through that path.

The finals of these two events will be shot on Sunday, but the winners get only a decimal advantage for finishing among the top three, which of course may prove crucial in a tight race.

The results (qualification):

Men: 25m rapid fire pistol: 1. Anish Bhanwala 587; 2. Vijayveer Sidhu 580; 3. Ankur Goel 579; 4. Bhavesh Shekhawat 577; 5. Adarsh Singh 572. **Women: 25m sports pistol:** 1. Rhythm Sangwan 586; 2. Simranpreet Kaur Brar 585; 3. Manu Bhaker 585; 4. Esha Singh 579; 5. Abhidnya Patil 575.

Mbappe to leave PSG at the end of season

The star confirms he will play his final game for the club against Toulouse on Sunday as he is likely to join Real Madrid; leaves the French champion side without Champions League silverware

FOOTBALL

Agence France-Presse
PARIS

Bidding adieu: Mbappe announced his decision in a video posted on social media. AFP

Kylian Mbappe confirmed on Friday that he will leave French champions Paris Saint-Germain at the end of the season, with Real Madrid widely expected to be his next destination.

The announcement brings an end to a prolific association with his hometown team, which began when he signed from Monaco in 2017 in a deal worth 180 million euros ($194 million).

"I wanted to announce to you all that it's my last year at Paris Saint-Germain.

"I will not extend and the adventure will come to an end in a few weeks," Mbappe, 25, said in a video posted on social media. "I will play my last game at the Parc des Princes on Sunday."

PSG has already secured the Ligue 1 title, its 10th in the last 12 seasons, and the Qatar-owned club will pick up the trophy after Sunday's game against Toulouse.

It means Mbappe will be denied the send-off he had hoped for in the Champions League final at Wembley on June 1 and will end his seven-year spell at PSG without ever having won Europe's elite club competition.

Mbappe informed PSG privately in February of his intention to depart when his contract expires at the end of the current campaign.

The 2018 World Cup winner had never confirmed publicly he was leaving, though, far less said where he will be going next, but it appears certain that he is bound for Real Madrid.

"It's a lot of emotions, many years where I had the chance and the great honour to be a member of the biggest French club, one of the best in the world," said Mbappe.

"It allowed me to arrive here, to have my first experience in a club with a lot of pressure, to grow as a player of course, by being alongside some of the best in history, some of the greatest champions," he added. "It's hard and I never thought it would be this difficult to announce that... but I think I needed this, a new challenge, after seven years."

After Sunday's game, PSG will complete its league campaign with away matches at Nice and at relegation-threatened Metz.

Teenage sensation Endrick in Brazil's Copa America squad but no Neymar

Agence France-Presse
RIO DE JANEIRO

Endrick. REUTERS

Teen phenomenum Endrick was named in Brazil's Copa America squad on Friday by coach Dorival Junior but there was no place for Neymar, who has been sidelined since suffering a serious knee injury on international duty in October.

Real Madrid forwards Vinicius Junior and Rodrygo are both included, with FC Porto attacker Evanilson the only new call-up for the June 20-July 14 tournament which will be held in the USA.

Manchester United midfielder Casemiro and veteran defender Thiago Silva, who will leave Chelsea for hometown club Fluminense at the end of the season, have been omitted.

Along with the 17-year-old Endrick, who is due to join Real Madrid from Palmeiras in July, Dorival also selected Girona forward Savio and club teammate Yan Couto.

Brazil, which lost the 2021 Copa America final on home soil to bitter rival Argentina, will play Colombia, Paraguay and Costa Rica in Group D. It is set to face Mexico and the USA in friendlies before beginning its campaign on June 24.

The squad:

Goalkeepers: Alisson, Bento, Ederson; **Defenders:** Danilo, Yan Couto, Guilherme Arana, Wendell, Lucas Beraldo, Eder Militao, Gabriel Magalhaes, Marquinhos.

Midfielders: Andreas Pereira, Bruno Guimaraes, Douglas Luiz, Joao Gomes, Lucas Paqueta;

Forwards: Endrick, Evanilson, Gabriel Martinelli, Raphinha, Rodrygo, Vinicius Junior, Savio.

Current ranking shows actual condition of Pakistan team: Ramiz

CRICKET

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NEW DELHI

Former Pakistan Cricket Board chairman slammed the Men in Green after Ireland clinched its maiden T20I win over the Asian Giants in the first T20I of the three-match series.

Ahead of the T20 World Cup in June, Pakistan has been trying to find the right combination by tweaking its squad.

"You can't defend losing against Ireland. The body language looks weak, you have made combinations that have affected the team.

Captaincy change

"The team was doing well, but the captaincy was changed and then the new captain was replaced with the previous one.

"In a World Cup year, the team has fallen to seventh position in the T20I rankings and this shows the actual condition of the team," Ramiz said on his YouTube Channel.

He went on to question the need to implement the changes in the squad that have contributed to their mixed bag of performances.

"How will Pakistan win the World Cup, you don't have a combination, the opening pair is not set, the set batters lose their wickets and the middle order doesn't function well. "In the current situation, how will Pakistan go to the semi-finals?" Ramiz said.